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Volume I

Louis Goldblatt

WORKING CLASS LEADER IN THE ILWU, 1935-1977

in two volumes

With an Introduction by
Clark Kerr

An Interview Conducted by
Estolv Ethan Ward
in 1978, 1979

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LOUIS GOLDBLATT

1977

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Willa Baum
Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

November 1980
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University of California at Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

I saw Lou Goldblatt in action the first time I ever visited the Berkeley campus. I met a friend in the coffee shop at I House. We had just started to talk when a person came through, with a small group behind him, shouting about a rally to be held outside Sather Gate. My friend said he was Lou Goldblatt, a campus radical, organizing a protest against some policy of the university, then under the presidency of Robert Gordon Sproul. The phrase I remember was something about "storming the walls" of the University, as though it were the Bastille.

This was the fall of 1932. I was at Stanford after having graduated from Swarthmore. Lou had just come up from UCLA. My interests were in the peace movement, reflecting four years at Swarthmore and three summers as a "peace caravaner" with the American Friends Service Committee. Lou came out of the political hotbed of the famous "alcoves" at City College of New York before UCLA and was already a member of the Communist Party (from whioh he drifted away a decade-and-a-half later) and says in these memoirs that Communists were then a "very active group at Cal." We were both, however, student political activists, however far apart, and there were few of them in those days. That Goldblatt incident was both my first impression of Berkeley and my first viewing of a left-wing political rally. Incidentally, Lou roamed around Sather Gate once again in 1964 at the time of the FSM protests; and he thought it all "wonderful." This was a view I did not share. I thought it was, in many ways, an unnecessary tragedy -- including creating a political base for the rise of Ronald Reagan.

I saw Lou on many occasions thereafter beginning with World War II -- as wage stabilization director of the War Labor Board on the West Coast, and later as Vice-Chairman of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska region, as Impartial Chairman between the ILWU and the Waterfront Employers Association, as arbitrator in Hawaii, as Vice-Chairman of the National Wage Stabilization Board. And, of course, with my field of teaching being industrial relations, I heard or read a great deal about him. So I have known a

great many of the people he talks about, been familiar with almost all of the situations he speaks about, and participated in a few of these situations at first hand. The last situation was an effort he made to propose a solution to the FSM controversy in 1964; an effort which I rejected.

This background allows me to say what a frank account Lou gives of a most fascinating life. History is not re-written, as it so often is. His account rings true from start to finish. There is no effort at self-justification, at retroactive revision of the record; just a straight-out story of what happened and how it looked to Lou when it happened. So many oral histories are cleaned-up accounts of what came to look like antiseptic lives. This one is not.

In reading it I was struck by a number of things, including these few:

> The goodwill toward and respect for several of the employer representatives with whom he dealt.
>
> His sadness over the break with Harry Bridges. I once asked Harry in the 1970s about Lou and his only reply was "That Maoist."
>
> The tremendous change from class warfare on the Waterfront in the 1930s and 1940s to the climate of peaceful coexistence today; and from the violent enmity between the ILWU and the Teamsters to cooperation with Jimmy Hoffa.
>
> The development of stable labor-management relations in Hawaii out of the most nearly semi-feudal conditions that ever existed on U. S. territory -- a transformation of historic proportions.

Lou lived through some great historic events, including the March Inland beginning in 1935, the organizing period of the CIO, the unionization of plantation workers on the Hawaiian Islands, the rise and fall of influence of the Communist Party and the Old Left in the United States; and he made visits to Russia, Israel and China. He speaks of all this with candor and in a most interesting way. One need not agree with his political philosophy - and I never

have - to recognize here a most valuable and even essential contribution to the history of half a century of great social change; and to recognize also that Harry Bridges and Lou Goldblatt, together and apart, built an honest, democratic, effective trade union that had great impacts on the West Coast and Hawaii. Lou Goldblatt walks through these pages as he has through life as a man of the Left, as an energetic participant in history, as a bright observer of the passing scene, as a realist, as a participant in many battles but who could also stand outside of them and above them, and as a person of more good will and good humor than he appeared to be to some who knew him along the way. He ends these many journeys, as he began them, with hope.

Clark Kerr
President of the University,
Emeritus

21 October 1980
University of California
Berkeley, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

There is a rare thing about Louis Goldblatt that I hope has been captured in this oral history. He has defied the cynical adage: "He who does not believe in socialism at age 20 has no heart; he who still believes in socialism at age 40 has no head."

Although now far from the days when he had glib revolutionary answers for the world's problems, at age 70 Lou Goldblatt still entertains the passionate and abiding belief that the more unified all workers become, the better the populace of this planet will fare. In one word, UNIONS.

I share that belief, and on this basis Lou and I have been friends and occasional fellow workers in the union vineyard since the days of the Great Depression.

Thus it follows that in 1977, after Lou's retirement as secretary-treasurer of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, a job he had held with honor and distinction for 34 years, I knew he was in deep trouble.

He was almost literally a beached whale. By a decision in which Lou himself was the final determinant, requiring all the union's top leadership to step out as the best solution to a prolonged internecine struggle, he found himself with nothing to do. And Goldblatt fits the definition of a "workaholic" to perfection. More important, his union could still have used his highly valued services. There were many fields of endeavor in which his experience, knowledge, and fertile mind could still have been of use. He was aware of this -- and so were thousands of union men and women whose lives he had helped to make more livable. Psychologically, he was a wounded man.

I and many others knew of his trouble. And I happened to know that the Bancroft Library, that segment of the University of California at Berkeley that has done so much to preserve the history of the American West, had sought his oral history. However, there was a financial problem involved which displeased Goldblatt.

"I'll be damned if I'll have people go tin-cupping

around among my friends so I can blow my own horn," was his dictum.

The project lay dead in the water until my wife and I conceived the idea of taking his oral history on a volunteer basis. My wife, Angela, is a former union organizer who has given her own oral history to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the California Historical Society, and who respects the value of such undertakings. She also happens to be an excellent typist and transcriber. We agreed that if I could persuade Lou Goldblatt to submit to the necessary interviews, she would transcribe the tapes.

At a Christmas Eve party in 1977 at the home of Bill and Eva Maas in San Francisco I approached Lou and put my question. His answer was neither enthusiastic nor scornful, not yes and not no. I did not press the point, but a few moments later I drew aside his wife, Terry, and told her what Angela and I had in mind. I said that as well as offering a significant contribution to American labor history, it would be an excellent catharsis for Lou to talk it all out; spill his grief and pride on his metaphorical beard. Terry was instantly excited, hopeful. She was very worried about Lou.

Nothing happened. After a couple of weeks I drew up a list of questions I proposed to ask, based on personal knowledge of some of his more exciting exploits over the years, and mailed it to Lou at his home in Mill Valley. That brought a phone call, an agreement for me to come visit him "so we can kick the gong around."

Lou had two objections to my list of questions. He did not want to talk about the Communist party or in detail about Harry Bridges, his one-time friend and partner in unionism who had turned against him. I understood his reasons: on Communism he had no fear for himself, only concern for others. He had never hidden his past connection with Communism. It was friends and fellow workers he had in mind. He did not intend to embarrass or damage anyone, no, sir! On Bridges, Lou's instinct was to protect and advance the cause of his union, and he could not see how washing the union's dirty linen in public would serve any good purpose.

I argued that he could discuss his own role as a practicing radical without damaging anyone else; also that as far as his situation with Bridges was concerned, word of

it already had been bandied about in the press and many of the details were known to thousands of union members. So -- why be secretive? While he would not admit a change of mind on these points, we did agree to begin taping.

The interviews took place on a more or less weekly basis for the entire year of 1978, less a month during which Lou and Terry took a long delayed trip to China. The taping was done in the Goldblatt kitchen, a large and comfortable multi-purpose room with the telephone at hand and a pleasant overlook of a wooded valley and the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais. Not all of the sessions produced tapes. Sometimes we would spend the entire morning with the tape recorder set aside, discussing what should and should not be said about some subject Lou considered sensitive.

In this regard, Lou surprised me. This man with guts of steel, who had faced cops and guns and angry men with baseball bats, who had stiffed process servers and congressional redbaiters and injunctions and lawyers trying to get big money from his union, is a softy at core. He visibly dreaded talking about some of the things I urged him to discuss; he suffered while uttering the words. Even long after his story was taped, I saw tears come to his eyes on re-reading some of the passages in the transcript. To him, exposure of the nest of nastiness his union headquarters had become in the seventies was almost like turning the knife in his own wounds. Things had been said and done for which he never will be able to find a reason. He still is puzzled, but he no longer mourns.

There was a witness to all the tapings -- an African parrot named Yarrow. She delighted in supplying sound effects for my recorder; sometimes she enlivened human discourse with shrieks and whistles, demands for attention which Lou pacified by going to her cage and giving her an affectionate tweak of the beak. At other times she got down on the bottom of her cage, under the newspaper flooring, where she rustled and bustled and scratched and scrabbled, making sounds that came through on tape like being next door to a raging forest fire. Lou's explanation for her actions is duly recorded on the tape and in the script.

Terry usually managed to be absent during the tapings, but frequently came in toward the end of the session, to make a disturbance something like Yarrow's newspaper

rattling by unwrapping parcels to put food in the refrigerator. Fortunately I was able to explain to Terry with much better effect than to Yarrow what happens to paper rattling when it has been boosted electronically several decibels. Occasionally we spent a morning when the telephone rang very little. Mostly, however, we just had to put up with many interruptions of this nature; the daughters calling, or maybe the brother or sister; many friends, union officials, long distance calls. Eventually, however, we got the job done.

Then came the editing. Lou loves to tell stories, and he has hundreds of them -- maybe thousands. If a story is good he likes to tell it over and over again, and it was physically almost impossible to stop his repetitions. Also I found it unwise to stop him, for quite often the repetition developed a new and interesting phase of the subject under discussion. In order to bring the transcript under some semblance of control, I have had to edit out from ten to twenty per cent of the verbiage.

Furthermore, there were instances where Lou had afterthoughts about events such as his trip to the Soviet Union and his 1967 visit to Israel. These are inserted according to context, not according to the sequence in which the taping actually took place. Also, his version of the China trip is taken at his request from a report he wrote, and does not appear on the tapes.

Lou dropped hundreds of names which were either incomplete or had to be verified. Dates had to be checked, quirks of memory ironed out; Lou himself did much of the checking. In this work, in addition to the monumental task performed by Angela, I gained assistance from quite a few other sources. The most prominent of these was Carol Schwartz, the librarian at ILWU headquarters in San Francisco. Some of my questions she answered almost offhand. Others took her hours of research. She is to be thanked for whatever claims to accuracy the completed script might offer. Others who helped include Saburu Fujisaki, education and membership service director, Local 142, Hawaii, and Ah Quon McElrath of that local's staff; the army historian at the San Francisco Presidio; the Japanese-American League of San Francisco and the Jewish Community Library of BJE (Bureau of Jewish Education), whose staffs gave valued assistance.

Also I would like to express gratitude for the enthusiastic support, encouragement and guidance given during the post-interview phase of the work by Dr. James Hart, director of the Bancroft Library, and several members of his staff; these include Andrea Nakagawa, Willa K. Baum, head of the Regional Oral History Office, and her assistant, Judy Johnson.

In conclusion, I would like to give a quote from Louis Goldblatt that does not appear in the script. At his seventieth birthday party recently, he made a short speech in which his final words were to propose a toast "to the survivors who haven't sold out."

Estolv Ethan Ward
Interviewer-Editor

15 October 1980
Berkeley, California

VOLUME I

I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND CHILDHOOD

(Interview 1: 15 February, 1978)##

The Lithuanian Jewish Freethinkers

Ward: The interview is taking place at the Goldblatt home in Mill Valley. Lou, since we have known each other for over forty years, there is no point in my calling you "Mr. Goldblatt." So, let's begin - first of all, the best thing to do is to ask you when you were born and where.

LG: I was born on June 5, 1910 in the Bronx, New York City. I think the address was 1244 Washington Avenue. That's fairly close to the lower part of the Bronx; Washington was one block west of Third Avenue where the "L" used to run. The family moved shortly after I was born to 1376 on the same street, a block up. There I do recall spending a lot of my early years; almost up to the time I went to high school -

Ward: In the Bronx?

LG: In the Bronx - because -

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 1166.

Ward: Where did I get the idea of Chicago?

LG: Only because there's a Goldblatt Department store to which I am not related.

Ward: I see - okay, we're back in the Bronx -

LG: The school I went to is Public School 2. In the course of discussion with someone some years ago when I visited New York this person insisted that P.S. 2 was no more - that the buildings had been condemned. I was curious, got a car or a cab, drove up to that section of the Bronx. Part of it had been torn down and there was some low-cost public housing. The balance of it was extremely run down - they were primarily tenement houses; but there was the public school too. You had to look carefully - you could barely distinguish it because of the dirt. The whole thing was all blackened.

Ward: How many years after your boyhood was this?

LG: Oh, it was a long time afterwards - it must have been about 15 years ago, 16 years ago.

Ward: I see, well, then - in your boyhood, it was not as dilapidated a neighborhood?

LG: No. When our family first moved there it was a generally mixed neighborhood.

Ward: Mixed in what sense? What kind of people, ethnically?

LG: Ethnically, I would say there were a good many Germans living there, garden variety Americans of various kinds; a lot of non-immigrants. I think that my family must have been one of the early immigrants who moved into that area; my father and mother came to this country, she somewhat ahead of him, about 1904 or thereabouts; my father got here about 1905 or the end of 1904 -

Ward: Where did they come from?

LG: Came from the same town in Lithuania - a town called Kaunas.

Ward: How do you spell that?

LG: It's spelled K A U N A S; not among the Jews, though and I'm not sure among the Lithuanians either. They pronounce it Kovna.

Ward: Kovna?

LG: Just as you would spell K O V N A - Kovna. At one time it might have been the capital of Lithuania. I understand that Vilnius is now the capitol. I recall my folks talking about Vilna, apparently an adjacent town to Kovna; they're sister cities across a small stream, or something. They both came from there.

Ward: Did they know each other before they came to this country?

LG: They did. They were both active in the Socialist Bund. Mind, this is the early 1900s. And they were both part of the general wave of migration that had taken place in the 1800s and the early 1900s.

Initially they settled, like most immigrants did, among their friends, people they knew. That was on the East side and -

Ward: Let's go back just a moment, if you don't mind; the Socialist Bund, was there any connection with the 1905 revolution or rebellion there?

LG: I don't believe so, - I think both of them came before the 1905 uprising.

I'm not sure that the 1905 uprising had that much of an impact on Lithuania, although it was a part of Russia at the time. I assume that the basic language was Russian, not Lithuanian, which was quite a different language. I gathered that they had both languages - Lithuanian and Russian. My mother spoke some Russian, but only fair. My dad spoke a very good Russian, in fact held on to it all his life.

LG: As to whether the 1905 uprising penetrated that deeply, I'm not sure. In her case, migration was not all that difficult, inasmuch as from all I could gather there were no great impediments. There were Jews moving out of that section of the world. Whether she went directly from Lithuania or the way many of them did from Poland, I'm not sure.

In my father's case it was quite a different scene. There was compulsory conscription into the Czar's army; in the event that a boy from a family was called up and failed to report, then the family itself could be penalized in various ways; their material possessions taken away, or others in the family conscripted. So he went into the army.

Walking Away From The Czar

LG: He was stationed in the Caucasus and apparently got to be a pretty good horseman. To his dying day, he would never eat mutton again, or lamb, because that was their basic diet down there. He got to hate it so badly that he would never touch it. Terry* once served him some lamb which she thought was pretty thoroughly disguised and he took one bite and said, "That's it."

Anyway, apparently they were both quite active in the Socialist Bund. I gathered he kept in touch with the Bund while he was in the army, and I was told that it was his job as a member of the army to finally try to get guard duty.

Apparently, there were some political prisoners being held in the Caucasus. He finally managed to get this guard duty, and at this point arrangements were made for my father and the prisoner he was guarding to leave together: they left from the port of Batum which is on the Black Sea -

Ward: B A T U M?

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*Wife of Louis Goldblatt

LG: That's right. That's the port that would be directly across that peninsula between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. It might be one of the first oil pipe lines ever built, because they had discovered oil in Baku, the other side of this peninsula -

Ward: The distinction between Batum and Baku - ?

LG: Yes, because Baku is on the Caspian Sea. I got to it many years later - 1959. Batum is at the other end and, as I recall from a bit of reading and talking to my Dad, it was primarily an oil and bulk port.

I assume that the arrangements were that they paid off the skipper to take a couple of stowaways. My father left that way. He did some bumming around Europe - worked in Holland for a while.

Ward: Did he have any skill or occupation before going into the army?

LG: Oh, yes. He'd been apprenticed at the age of nine with a cabinet maker and he had become a very skilled cabinet maker; remained that way all of his life.

He had apparently not too many problems in finding work in different cabinet shops. In those days all this type of work was small industry work - a man might employ a half a dozen. Ten people was a big outfit. He used to have some stories and yarns about his travels there before he got to the United States.

Strikes and "Cossacks"

LG: So both my father and mother knew each other. There had been strikes there. I knew about that because my father carried a wound - I guess it was the Cossacks or the armed forces; they called all the policemen and the armed forces "Cossacks". It was a nomenclature they used; in this country they called the cops on horseback "Cossacks" -

Ward: That's right - it got to be a pejorative word.

LG: That's right. And he still carried the scars where they had broken up a workers' demonstration with a lot of shooting, so that -

Ward: A scar - you mean a physical scar?

LG: Yes, on his foot - he had been wounded in the foot - it never interfered with his walking. Apparently in those days that was the way a demonstration was taken care of.

It was an interesting thing while they were both very hostile to the Czar, they were not hostile to Russia as such. If anything, my father and mother still saw it as Mother Russia; all their lives they were basically Russophiles. In most respects they were freethinkers, as against the orthodox thinkers there -

About Religion

Ward: They weren't what you'd call religious Jews, then?

LG: They were non-religious. My mother was indifferent to it; my father was a pretty aggressive atheist. Not that he'd make that much of an issue of it, but he would make it quite plain. I recall, for example, when Passover came along - that's usually quite a Jewish holiday; several Seders - it's a commemoration in part for the exodus of the Jews from Egypt - the Seder. One of the reasons for matzos (they don't use bread) goes back to the concept that they did not have yeast; it was unleavened bread. Well, my father and mother didn't see any good reason why they shouldn't have some good dinners and have friends in, the same as other people did. My father would insist that there be bread on the table as well as matzos.

Nobody went through the various religious ceremonies at the passover dinners. I recall as kids that the most pleasant thing about it was that there

LG: was an enormous variety of food and plenty of it; company coming by. Questions were sometimes asked, "How come you have bread on the table?" - which according to the religious people was not supposed to be there. And my father would simply answer, "Look, I have all kinds of friends; some people like bread, some people like matzos; they can help themselves." It was in these forms that his atheism showed up. My mother never felt much differently than that, though she wasn't quite as aggressive about it as my father.. And he used to have some - oh, some imitative dovening -

Ward: Imitative praying?

LG: Dovening is praying among the Jews. Words that were not particularly flattering to the rabbis and to the religious people. I recall him going through a ritual which was pure fun as far as he was concerned. It was in the same sing-song the rabbis use and the people in the synagogue use (here is Goldblatt singing) which sounds very religious, but only means in Yiddish that the goats pick up their tails and the rabbis sniff. (laughter) Obviously, a little bit scatological.

So, that was the background; and they maintained it all their lives. They were what you call "yiddishten" and continued that way, even though it was a dwindling group to which they belonged.

Ward: Why was it a dwindling group?

LG: The reason it was dwindling was that the ones who were really "yiddishten", felt very strongly about the Yiddish language, about Yiddish culture, Yiddish songs; their roots were primarily among their friends who were from the same part of the world and who thought very similarly to them. Like they belonged to an organization called "the Kovna Old Friends". It obviously was a dwindling group - they died off.

Ward: Oh, when the old friends died, that was it?

LG: That's it. For example, I still understand some Yiddish; I can sort of labor my way. Terry understands none. The kids have a few words, that's about all, but among the Yiddishten such as my father and mother and their friends Yiddish was a very basic language, even though my dad, who was in the outside world most of the time -

Ward: He had to learn English?

LG: He learned good English and learned it very well - taught himself to read blueprints; he was a highly skilled man. On that score they were bilingual entirely -

A Quick Jump To Hollywood

Ward: He was tri-lingual?

LG: He was tri-lingual because he could transfer to Russian almost as easily.

There's a bit of a story about him that I remember. Dolores Del Rio - she was an actress - Dolores Del Rio, perhaps the most beautiful woman in the world. I remember working on a set when she first turned up there; we were working on these catwalks rigging up some scenery -

Ward: Oh, we got on to Hollywood now?

LG: Yes, it's an example of how good his Russian was. The first time I saw her I damn near fell off the thing. I think the man who brought her over here married her. Edwin Carew, the director. Edwin Carew.

Ward: Edwin Carew?

LG: Right. They brought Tolstoy's son over here as sort of a technical advisor to this movie "Resurrection", in which Dolores Del Rio was featured. This was before the talkies, which sort of destroyed her.

LG: And my father, who was working at Tec-Art at the time, was also used in the capacity of a translator.

My mother was fair at Russian and when they wanted to talk between themselves so that the kids wouldn't understand, they would not talk in Yiddish or in English; they would use Russian.

Back To The Bronx

LG: Going back to my family, in the Bronx, they initially lived in the East Side - I think what they called Howston Street, (what we call Houston). That's still true in New York today - it's pronounced Howston.

Ward: That makes sense.

LG: Yes. My father and mother decided to move out of that neck of the woods when the family was just being formed; I think my sister had just been born. She's older than I am by a couple of years. I was born in the Bronx.

When they decided to move to the Bronx - to many of the Jews this was a completely strange world like a transplanted Jewish settlement in many respects.

Some of my parents' friends asked my mother, "Well, why do you want to move up there? What will the neighbors think?" In other words, this whole feeling, was she going to be accepted? And her reply was really quite simple. She said, "I've been there and I've seen the neighbors and I sort of liked them. I wouldn't like it very much if they moved out." She was going to move, and that was it. Yeah. Even though they moved there they still maintained their ties with their old friends; they continued to maintain them even after they moved to the coast here.

Ward: When did they get married?

LG: Either in 1905 - 1906 perhaps - yes, 1906.

The Other Children

Ward: And then the first child was your sister -

LG: Yes, my sister -

Ward: Then you and other children?

LG: Then my brother, Sam; he's three years younger than I am and my sister is two years older than I am. Then there's a bit of a gap and a younger brother became part of the family - Saul -

Ward: Oh, yes, I remember -

LG: You might have met him -

Ward: Oh, yes, he entertained us in Paris -

LG: That's right because I recall -

Ward: He was very interested in the making of the movie Hiroshima, Mon Amour -

LG: He was a sort of amateur photographer. He was also interested in the mime -

Ward: Yes, he was a theatrically inclined person -

LG: Yes, he did some work with Marcel Marceau; he made a short film that was shown in the festival - the festival here - and also the one at Cannes. It was a picture of the mime built around the idea of a store where you could change your head. If you weren't happy with the one you were wearing, you could make a switch. It was a fairly good short film.

Ward: Let's see now, there were four children -

LG: My brother was a chemical engineer. That was his work; he worked for a big outfit there - Loomis. They designed primarily these cracking plants that are used by oil companies. They take the raw oil as it comes out of the ground -

Ward: And they crack it into its various component parts.

LG: Right, right.

Ward: Well, then, there were the four children. Did your mother - was she a housewife or did she work?

The Division of Labor

LG: Well, she started off working in New York as a garment worker, although I don't believe she ever went back to work once the family was being formed.

The old Jewish traditions pretty well prevailed in the community, regardless of whether they were orthodox, non-believers or atheist; namely, the division of labor, where the mother had responsibility for the children and the house. The man's job was to provide the living. This was more progress, in my opinion, than among the highly orthodox Jews, where the men were considered to be doing their entire day's work by studying the Talmud; they were professional doveners -

Ward: Professional what?

LG: Prayers -

Ward: Oh, yes - the same word again.

LG: Yes, they would go through the whole ritual from putting on the tfillim - those are the little square boxes, together with the philacteries that they wrap on their arms. What they all represent, I'm not quite sure.

These things grew over the years - and the yamulka - the small prayer cap; the day would have to start that way. And among some of these orthodox Jews that was the balance of their life.

Ward: That was a pretty easy life.

LG: It would strike me that way; the raising of a family, as well as somehow making a livelihood, fell on the woman, because the man was doing the Lord's work. So that it was definitely a form of progress where a woman was only burdened with the house care and the children and not with trying to rummage up enough so they could feed the family as well.

Ward: So the division of labor was more equal?

Women and Orthodoxy

LG: No question in my mind. Yes. Sure. Still to this day highly orthodox Jews live in one section of Jerusalem, go so far as to dedicate one room in their house so as to augment this religiosity; the same pattern persists in terms of the role of women.

The other features of the orthodox group were thoroughly benighted - women shaving their heads when they got married and wearing a wig -

Ward: What was the purpose of that?

LG: They wore a wig, their hair made up again as a wig. Whether this was part of the marriage vows or the business of being married - in other words, where hair has always been associated with the beauty of a woman . . . .

Ward: Oh, yes, she would make herself repulsive to everybody except her husband -

LG: Yes, that might have been it; an off-shoot of monagamy. It also might be a carry-over, the whole attitude of orthodox Jews toward women which has changed a bit, primarily because the women have gotten tougher.

The whole divorce system which is extremely rigorous and entirely under the aegis of the rabbis, was one where the woman stood behind the man and it was the man who stepped forward and announced the

LG: reason for the divorce. The woman sat there quietly, or stood there quietly. He was the one, under an orthodox Jewish divorce. For example, if the woman couldn't bear children - things like that. It could go back to the role of women as chattels, practically under the initial kings of Israel.

The Family Scene

Ward: Well, let's look at the family scene. You were the oldest son -

LG: Yes.

Ward: Did that position give you pre-eminence among the four children?

LG: Not particularly, there again the folks were free thinkers. They placed enormous emphasis on education, music, culture. My mother read a great deal, but always in Yiddish.

Ward: Was there a good spread of literature in that language available to her?

LG: I'm not sure how large that spread was, but there was enough around; for example, Sholem Aleichem wrote in Yiddish. I suppose they read everything Sholem Aleichem ever wrote. Sholem Aleichem was their kind of person because as he himself used to say, "There's enough literature for the sheiner menschen, I'm writing for the proste menschen."

Ward: What?

LG: Sheiner menschen would be something like "the beautiful people" - proste menschen is "common man."

Ward: I see.

LG: Sometimes used in a derogatory way, "he's a proste yid." But Sholem Aleichem didn't take it that way - the proste menschen was his ambience and he wrote

LG: for them. My folks always subscribed to Jewish papers; they were original subscribers to the Freiheit, probably kept subscribing to that until their last days.

Ward: So you saw the Freiheit around the house as a child?

LG: The Freiheit around, yes, but there were a couple of papers you never saw there. One was the Forward.

Ward: That was the conservative Jewish paper?

LG: Conservative Social Democratic Jewish newspaper. There was one that was a little further to the right as I recall - that was Der Tag, the daily. That went out of print.

Ward: In other words, obviously right wing literature was not seen around your home?

LG: I suppose a lot of the literature that my sister would bring home or that I would get at school or check out of the library maybe fell in that class. In terms of ideologically rightwing literature the answer is "No".

Ward: Well, I gather that a family like yours would be pretty articulate. There must have been a lot of talk around the dinner table and during the evening, in which you probably got some ideas. Can you recall any particular form the conversation would take which interested you?

LG: There was always a lot of discussion around the dinner table. On most occasions we ate together, although not all the time, partially because of the schedules that the members of the family kept.

I do recall that there were a number of conversations about Debs*-- I think they attended every demonstration in support of Debs that ever took place in New York City. Remember, he was not only a candidate for President on the Socialist ticket; he ran while he was in jail.

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*Eugene V. Debs, famous Socialist

Tillie Goldblatt (above)
Boris Goldblatt (below)
Born in Lithuania

Louis Goldblatt
ca. 1914

Ward: That would have been when you were 8 or 10 - before you were 10?

LG: Yes; even after Debs was gone, they still talked about him. I recall later conversations around the table - oh, this must have been when I was ten or thereabouts, about Tom Mooney;* whether there was much about Sacco and Vanzetti* I'm not sure myself.

Ward: Well, Sacco and Vanzetti didn't come on until later -

LG: - until later. I was a bit older and I might not have been spending that much time at home. I was away a good deal.

Ward: You were about 18 then -

LG: Seventeen or eighteen - 1927-28.

There was a lot of discussion; articles in the Freiheit; some of the features - they had favorite writers. The Freiheit carried short stories or even serials. Not only discussion of these things, but sometimes they would be read aloud because of certain phrases used.

Ward: Who would read aloud?

LG: My dad or my mother, either one -

Ward: Either one?

LG: Right.

Ward: It was exclusive?

Yiddish Schools

LG: No, none of us ever became that proficient in Yiddish. I could read a fair amount of it because I went to the Sholem Aleichem Folk School.

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*Mooney, a Socialist, and Sacco and Vanzetti, Anarchists, were sentenced to death after highly questionable convictions for murder. Mooney was finally pardoned; the others were executed.

Ward: That would be after hours at the public school?

LG: Uh, uh; the progressive Jews and freethinkers like my mother and father thought of Yiddish not only as a language but as a culture. They were thoroughly attached to it. They wanted to maintain this whole concept of Yiddish for the children, but neither would they send us to the usual <u>cheders</u> or schools.

Ward: The Yiddish schools?

LG: Well, these were <u>cheders</u>, a combination in some cases of Yiddish and Hebrew.

Ward: Could you spell that word?

LG: C H E D E R. All of these finally consolidated a bit, partially because the schools were decimated by the mass exodus.

Ward: Let's get that a bit more clearly. The schools were decimated; why?

LG: A lot of the youngsters just rebelled against them, including even youngsters from the orthodox families -

Ward: And why did they?

LG: Oh, both because of its irrelevance, its rigors, the kind of faculty; the first schools were literally impossible. Everything was taught by rote. It was completely irrelevant.

If a youngster learned some Hebrew, he would simply learn enough so he could recite certain passages and finally the great culmination might be that he would learn enough so as to take part in a Bar Mitzvah when he was thirteen, at which point all of it went blank. He didn't know what the Hebrew was in ninety percent of the cases.

Ward: He was a parrot?

LG: Simply learning by rote; use of corporal punishment, if the kids didn't know their lesson, bang! it was the ruler on --

Ward: - On the hands?

LG: Yes, ruler on the hands. In many cases the early chederes were considered by the youngsters as taking away time they could have been playing ball or doing something else that might be more important, compared to going to this religious indoctrination.

While parents like mine were anxious to maintain Yiddish, they didn't want any part of this cheder concept. That's the way the Sholem Aleichem Folk Schools got going.

Ward: I see. It was the preferred alternative.

LG: Yes. There the objective was to simply teach the Yiddish language, get to read some Yiddish books, learn something of the Yiddish songs. It was completely non-religious.

Ward: Held on Saturdays? Evening after school?

LG: No, it was generally an hour or so after school, and I didn't find it all that obnoxious. I never was that happy when the rest of the kids were out playing baseball, and I wasn't.

Ward: Did you have to go? What happened if you didn't go?

LG: Not a great deal. I think it was just a feeling on my part - family pressure. In some cases, also, because my peers were there; it wasn't all that distasteful.

The whole technique must have been on a much better level than the chederes, although true, the Sholem Aleichem Schools finally faded out too; fewer and fewer children were interested in learning Yiddish. That's the reason; right now, Yiddish might only have another few years to go.

Ward: All right, well now aside from the Jewish aspects of your upbringing, I gather that social consciousness pervaded in your family.

LG: Yeah.

Ward: It became - do you have any recollection - a special thing in a social way that influenced you? A demonstration? An injustice you had witnessed? A good thing that you admired?

LG: Not during those days in particular. Some of the things I liked a great deal -

Ward: Like what?

LG: I had gone to some of the gatherings of my folks with some of their old friends. They belonged to a number of organizations which were of a progressive bent- things like the Workmen's Circle - social groups with perhaps some people who had become more prosperous than others. Still basically they had a left-wing tilt in the sense that they were fundamentally Socialist.

I used to both enjoy and admire these groups because the meetings were all in Yiddish. They would generally start the evenings with several songs, something that appears to be almost gone, - also in Yiddish. It was not too uncommon for them to have a "reader" come in. It might be some local person who could read poetry or read sections of a novel or short stories; even later on when the family was in L.A., there was a woman named Gina Medem - she used to write for the Freiheit once in a while.

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This was one of the ways she got by in life. She'd be paid a little bit for coming to one of these sessions and reading. She made the rounds of any number of organizations; I doubt if she had any other means of support.

Ward: What kind of stuff would she read? Poetry?

LG: Poetry in some cases - stories by Sholem Aleichem - things of that sort; other poetry of some of the Jewish poets. I was greatly impressed by a person like this, and I guess just as much by the group who were there and felt that keenly about having somebody

LG: such as Gina Medem at their gatherings. It was such a complete contrast to everything else that I could see on the outside world.

Ward: In contrast to your public school, for instance?

LG: Contrast to the public school, to the dances I was going to, contrast to the get-togethers in other homes, part of which were religious get-togethers, part of which were just social gatherings.

I thought there was more cohesiveness and genuine cultural identity in a group such as these yiddishten than among other people. I can still remember as a kid going into a house where they had all the accoutrements of a completely religious household. Dishes on which you could only eat milk products, dishes on which you could only eat meat products, special dishes that were only used at the time of Passover -

Ward: Did they wash these different dishes in the same dishwater?

LG: I doubt it. I guess they were doing it in conformance with the Kasruth.

Ward: The what?

LG: Kasruth - I think that's a section of the Talmudic studies that delineates all the dietary laws of the Jews, some of which are based on legend and some are based on ignorance.

Ward: Some of the dietary laws were based on the lack of refrigeration in those days -

LG: You could understand a dietary law where they would not eat pig. At one time, uncured ham was the primary cause of trichinosis, so I can see that being barred. But it was not put on that basis. The question was whether or not an animal had a cloven hoof; also the question of how an animal was butchered.

LG: I could understand why they barred shellfish because all of us know now, if you eat mussels out of season you are lucky to be around the next day. It was easy to bar all shellfish because shellfish are fundamentally scavengers. That makes sense. But then they went on to say that anything taken from the ocean had to have scales, which is another way of saying that anything like a mollusk -

Ward: Mollusks do not have scales -

LG: Mollusks do not have scales, but on the other hand, they also barred eel because some people, even to this day, think that an eel does not have scales. It does, but they are very tiny scales.

There are a lot of contradictions; while some of it might have had a logical basis, after a while it didn't have any. To this day there is sharp conflict even among the Jews.

For example, when I happened to be in Israel about two years ago, a little less than that, I was making the rounds of some of the outlying areas where there are kibbutsim. We passed one which we had visited - S A S A - because they have an educational institute where kids are taken out of the slum areas and integrated with the kibbutz families. And as we were driving away the guy I was with said, "Big rabbit, we've got - it weighs 300 pounds."

Of course, it was a pig. They saw nothing wrong in keeping some pigs. Then of course you have to be pretty careful about slaughtering and curing which is another story. Some of these things have never been resolved, to this day.

Friends and Enemies

Ward: Well, now, any other things that you remember that particularly repelled you as a youngster? What about the boys you met in the public school?

LG: Actually, in the public schools I don't recall any incidents -

Ward: No fights?

LG: Oh, yeah, sure - all kids have fights, but I don't recall fights between Jews and goys or something like that, or between racial groups. Of course, all kids belong to gangs; that's part of the business of survival in the tenement district. You had to have friends -

Ward: Something to do with -

LG: Survival, everybody belonged to a group. They called it "gangs", but they weren't gangs. There was also the basic framework of the baseball teams.

Ward: You had friends?

LG: Right. There were certain district rivalries. I remember there was always a rivalry going between the kids who lived on Washington Avenue and Park Avenue, which is a block away up in the Bronx.

Ward: Was there any fundamental difference, outside of the names of the streets, between the two groups?

LG: Not that I recall. There was a pretty fundamental difference between the part of the Bronx we lived in or, say, the part the people lived in, in the Van Cortland section, or the Concourse or "Concuuurse" as people would talk about it; that was supposed to be an uppity neighborhood - people on the rapidly upward mobile escalator. Sure there was a clear feeling that we belonged to different economic groups, but I don't recall having any great conflict with any other groups because they were goys and we were Jews.

On that score I'd say we got along fairly well except for the periodic gang fights - like all kid gangs - based on imaginary insults. Just letting go of a lot of energy.

Ward: But no knives - no guns?

LG: No, the closest to that was rock fights. There was a quarry about a block or so away. It was always a great meeting ground for this sort of thing. People improved their pitching arm, but nobody got hurt.

Ward: All right, so you went on demonstrations for Mooney and Debs at times?

LG: I remember mass meetings - I don't recall demonstrations as such. It wasn't a question of my mother and father trying to indoctrinate me. They were simply determined to live their own life style; it was a very clear and distinct thing that they had. It had nothing to do with religiosity, nothing to do with staying within the confines of the East Side. They saw no reason at all why they couldn't spread their arms.

The usual tradition, not just among Jews, but among many people, of the eldest son carrying certain responsibilities or having the rights of primogeniture, was not terribly important to the family. Initially they felt it was just as important, or more important, that my sister secure an education so that she could be independent to teach or do something other than sit around waiting for a swain; and she was a good student. As a matter of fact, while we were still living in New York City, she was going to Hunter, (the women's counterpart of CCNY).

Ward: Is she still around; what's she doing?

LG: She's retired now.

Ward: She's a teacher?

LG: Yes, she became a teacher; she went to Hunter College. After going to U.S.C., she went off to the Sorbonne in Paris.

Ward: What did she do at the Sorbonne?

LG: Took her doctorate there. I remember seeing her doctor's thesis - she sent me a copy - on some esoteric French poet. I don't recall his name; I

LG: labored through a few pages and realized it was strictly a doctor's thesis in every sense of the word. And -

Ward: Filed it away?

LG: Filed and forgotten. And if anybody's tracked it since then, I don't know. But she was one of the first women at the Sorbonne - at least one of the first American women at the Sorbonne to get a doctorate; they found that equally important.

Ward: Did she ever marry?

LG: Yes - married three times. Two adopted children. It's an interesting business, I'm sure it wasn't just because she wouldn't have to change the towels -

Ward: The towels?

LG: The towels because each of her husbands' name began with a "V", which is a pretty rare thing. It's hard to -

Ward: Was anybody superstitious about that?

LG: I don't think so - it was not a "v" for victory - or anything of that sort. I think it was just pure coincidence. She was married to a Frenchman for a while, an artist by the name of Vigereux. She was first married to a man named Varnum. I sort of vaguely remember him.

Vigereux came from the town of Dijon, I think, and he was a fairly good artist; not a really successful one. Eventually, he came over to the United States and settled in Hollywood, worked around the studios where my dad worked, my brother Sam worked and my brother Saul worked. Later on, Fay broke up with him and a few years later she married another man named "Vinock" - again another "v" - V I N O C K -

Ward: What nationality was he?

LG: I think Vinock was Jewish, but -

Ward: These others - the first two were not Jewish.

LG: No, Vigereux and Varnum were not Jewish.

Ward: Did your family object when she married non-Jews?

LG: No. I don't think they saw it as anything of any importance - it just wasn't their thinking; they accepted people as people.

Anti-Semitism

LG: I'm not saying that during those years I wasn't conscious of anti-semitism. I was - you couldn't grow up in New York without being conscious of it -

Ward: How did you feel it?

LG: For example, you'd see still ads in those days of "Only Christians Need Apply" -

Ward: Yes.

LG: Very simple things; you knew perfectly well that there were certain clubs where only Christians belonged. I can recall when I first went to CCNY,* there was some guy who started talking to me in the gym - I was working out. At that time I felt I could do something in gymnastics, -

Ward: You were a bit of an amateur gymnast?

LG: Oh, no, not really. I just couldn't put in all that time on it, anyway; it's practically continuous repetitious practice. Well, this guy approached me and apparently they had something -- it wasn't really a fraternity, it was a club. There were no fraternities, or if there were they were sort of semi-underground.

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* City College of New York

Ward: This was when you were a freshman at CCNY?

LG: Yes, at CCNY - and he wanted to know if I was interested in joining this club. I asked him what it was all about. He said, "Well, there are certain people who ought to stick together." I said, "I don't know what you're talking about, but my name is Goldblatt." There was no further invitation. So, you were conscious of these things. But in terms of any overt, aggressive anti-semitism, I don't recall any of that at P.S. 2 where I first went to school, or at P.S. 55 in the Bronx, a few blocks from where I lived. This was like a Junior High under one of these acceleration programs, which was an educational fad of the times -

Ward: Oh, that's because of your I.Q. - you were put among the bright kids -

LG: Yes - why, I don't know -

Ward: Don't be unduly modest.

LG: No, I'm not being unduly modest, but I don't recall any particular testing or whether this came out of recommendations that originated at the lower school. They had these accelerated programs where you did three years in two; the net result was that I entered and finished fairly young. I was just a bit over 16, and then went on to CCNY.

Ward: Let's see, then you were not yet 17 when you became a freshman at CCNY?

LG: That's right - about sixteen and a half. It was around February 1927 when I went to CCNY.

I don't think that this acceleration program was confined to New York City. It spread all through the educational structure. I doubt if they do that any more, and in some ways I'm not sure it's the best thing anyway. I would have gotten more out of school, and I think I would have been able to handle it better, if I'd just gone along a normal educational course in high school.

LG: Instead of getting out at the age of sixteen and a half, I would have gotten out at the usual age of 18. Then you are with your peers. That resulted in all kinds of dislocations, plus you feel as though you're a punk. You don't feel that you can take part in many things when you get to college.

In high school it was no great problem because your peers might be a grade behind but that made no difference; you would still see a good deal of them. You could still be playing ball with many of them. But when you got to college, it was a different break - some of them went and some didn't go.

Musical Beginnings

Ward: Before we get into college, let's go back a little earlier to another phase of your life - the music: that must have started pretty early.

LG: Yes, I'm not saying that it really started because -

Ward: Something happened?

LG: Yeah, no question about it. The family felt that it was very important to have a piano, musical instruments, around the place. These were characteristics of these people which, if they are lost, would really be quite tragic.

I don't think anything was quite as precious in a house as musical instruments and books. This strong feeling on the part of these Jews, not just as people who believed in their Jewish culture, but who also felt very keenly about the whole cultural structure of families and the world, was that learning music - some kind of learning - was terribly important; so we had a piano. Naturally, my sister started first; she stayed with it for some years, and then dropped it.

Ward: Was it an upright?

LG: It was an old Wurlitzer, as I remember, yeah. Even though my dad - this is a sidelight - you know when he first came to this country - and, as I said, he was a good cabinet maker - he went to work for Steinway; it must have been about 1906 just shortly after he came here. Recently we tried to find out whether he could have done some of the work on an old piano we have here. Terry and I picked up a Steinway when we were living in the city -

Ward: This one here? (mentioning a grand piano in the living room)

LG: No - no, this one belongs to Liza. (the Goldblatts' youngest daughter) We picked up an old Steinway in quite good shape. Very, very reasonable, I think it was something like one hundred bucks or two hundred dollars and really in fine condition. In trying to check the date of the piano, the best I could figure out was that it was made somewhere around 1905 - '06. When Liza was in New York for a while, I gave her the number on the piano and she made an attempt to see whether the Steinway people, who keep a good record of all their pianos, could trace the exact date and whether they would have any record of my dad working there.

Ward: Let me interject here a moment for the sake of the record. Lou is talking about one of his daughters - Liza - who is a very talented musician and who is a professional now, I believe.

LG: No, right now she is at UCLA* getting a doctorate in musicology. That's a brand new field to me.

We took piano lessons - bear in mind that there was no way for a family like ours to judge who was a good piano teacher. My dad, for example, played the mandolin. He taught himself entirely. He decided he wanted to learn the mandolin, went out and bought one -

Ward: Could he read music?

LG: No - no.

Ward: He had a musical ear then?

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* (University of California at Los Angeles)

LG: Yes, just as he had an amazing ear for languages. So did my sister and my brother. Sam inherited more of that than I did. They're all good linguists. My dad spoke not only Russian, he could get by in Polish, and I'm not sure whether he learned any Dutch. My sister learned many languages.

Ward: But he had this ear for music? Did your mother have any musical ability or talent?

LG: If so, it never showed other than she could carry a tune very well; she was not a monotone or anything.

Ward: She sang to you when you were kids?

LG: Yes; and she'd also sing when she worked around the kitchen - Yiddish songs, a few of which I remember. That passed the day for her and she liked it.

I studied the piano with some man who taught in the neighborhood. Of course, they would schedule as many kids as they could - they were trying to make a living. I forget what it cost a lesson. I recall that this man was not an outstanding piano teacher, because later on I realized I hadn't learned a single thing about musical structure or harmony, or anything of the sort. Again, it was learning by rote; you learned the scales, and his objective was that you'd be able to pick up a few small tunes, so that when he had his annual performance when the kids would show off at the Aeolian Hall -

Ward: That's a good name -

LG: Nothing less, of course! You have to have a good name on it; I'd say I probably could have done as well by just picking out tunes by myself.

I had no trouble hearing something like a popular tune and picking it up. I did learn a little bit about reading music, which was helpful because then as a kid in New York you formed a band. A band could make a few pennies, nickels, playing at something like a wedding, you know; a local dance. No street corner musicians.

LG: Oh, I'm not saying any of us were that good. Maybe some of the kids were; I wasn't. Actually, I learned a great deal more in the year and a half or two when I was older - eighteen, nineteen. I spent some time with a piano teacher in L. A. who at least knew what he was talking about. So, yes, we worked on the piano.

Ward: Did you practice a lot?

LG: That is a hard variable because if there was a good baseball game going on, that took precedence. And there was a peculiar thing; I mean, the attitude of the folks toward baseball was not too bad.

There were some sports they didn't think too much of. Basketball was all right, but they had some questions about it. Why? Because of some distant relative who had played basketball for NYU (New York University); Stern - that was his name. He'd gotten a hernia. They figured out that this was caused by his stretching, and playing too much basketball caused it. They didn't have too much use for that.

Later on, for example, when my brother, Sam played a lot of ice hockey -

Ward: Oh, that's a rough game!

LG: That was barred completely when some kid of one of the families who were close to us lost an eye as a goalie. Baseball is sort of accepted; after all, it's a kid game.

Ward: What was your position - what did you play?

LG: Mostly first base because a left-hander would play mostly first base; that's obvious. A left-hander could not be a catcher, right?

Ward: I didn't know you were left-handed.

LG: Yes, not when I write but I am left-handed.

Ward: Then you are sort of ambidextrous?

LG: Not completely, though. I'd play first base; once in a while they would let me pitch. I had a tendency to get a little wild, so it wasn't too often. We were still living on Washington, and we had a good kid team there.

You'd play a lot of stickball during the day right on the streets. That was just using a soft ball and a broomstick and bang it around. But we had a regular team and we played another team - I think it was Park Avenue again. The old running feud was still going on.

Somehow my folks got wind of the fact that some local characters - none of these guys were high rollers - were betting a few bucks on the game. And when they found that out, they said, "Forget it." That was different; that was gambling.

Ward: That was immoral?

LG: Right, right. They wanted no part of that.

Ward: Your folks were rather strict in certain ways?

LG: They had fixed ideas on some things - no question about that.

Ward: They weren't going to let their little boy get in trouble if they could help it?

LG: Yeah, on that score they thought as most Jews did; in a place like New York City if any Jewish kid got in trouble or landed in jail or found himself in the headlines for some crime, this was bad for all the people.

Ward: That this was damage to the Jewish community?

LG: Right. They saw nothing contradictory in being strong Socialists who wanted to change the whole system and being law-abiding. They would vary; they would be law-abiding, yet if the Cossacks, as they called them, broke up a strike demonstration, that was a different story; the Cossacks were breaking the law.

LG: They could understand why the workers would fight back, which was also my dad's characteristic. He was the same way. On that score they felt very strongly; yet in the daily routine, such as Jews getting mixed up in the rackets, they had no use for that and were very hostile to it.

Ward: Well, the music again. So you had a little group and played for a wedding or a dance?

LG: Not too well, but we got by. At weddings the most important thing was the noise. When you hit Chasen Kaleh, Mazeltov, the friends, because these were not religious weddings, well, sometimes they were - they would sing a song: Chasen means bridegroom; Kaleh is the bride, Mazeltov is happiness and there is a song Chasen Kaleh, Mazeltov. They had to come out good and strong in that song.

Ward: That's something getting that spelling.

LG: Oh, I don't know. Some people spell Chasen and they use a "k", simply assuming that somebody else knows what it means. Some people use a "ch" - it's a "khuh" sound - it's not a sound we have in English. They tell a story that this fellow studied very, very hard to be a rabbi, but he couldn't "huh", so he never made it.

Ward: I can imagine; like Hanukah is beyond me.

LG: There are all kinds of "khuhs"; it's Germanic, I guess. Chasen would be spelled C H A S E N, but you would not pronounce it "chosen".

Ward: And the next word is -

LG: Kale - KALE or Kaleh.

Ward: And then?

LG: Mazeltov - that's M A Z E L T O V.

Ward: That one I have seen many times in print. Well, I've heard you sit down at the piano and start playing classical and whatever. You don't practice now and you haven't practiced for years, I bet.

LG: No, I haven't practiced for years. The last time I did any practicing, Liza happened to be living at home and we'd play some of the Mozart duets. There I could still hold my own and read well enough to get by.

When I went to high school - by that time we had moved from Washington Avenue to Jackson Avenue. That was a bit of an improvement because instead of being a tenement, it was a two-story house.

Ward: And you had that to yourself as a family?

LG: No, we had one floor; it was a larger house, and it was very close to my high school and across the street from the playground. I could play until dinner time - until I felt I had to come in and do some practicing on the piano.

I went to the Sholem Aleichem School up until the time I went to high school; whether it continued beyond that I don't know. The family was quite close. My sister was going to college before I got there. There was no feeling around the family of poverty. My dad was a very good worker.

Ward: Your economic situation, considering everything, was fairly good?

LG: It wasn't too bad. I don't recall the family ever going hungry. It was not a family that had many luxuries - you needed new clothes, but we weren't that interested in them, either.

Ward: You had a piano - a mandolin?

LG: We had a piano, sure, and books. I think it was Sam or Saul who tried the violin for a while. Violin, to the Jews, made more sense than the piano in the old country.

Ward: But why?

LG: The only explanation I've heard which makes a bit of sense is that it is both easily hidden and easily transportable. If a Jew were evicted from a shtetl a violin was something he could take along with him.

Ward: A shtetl?

LG: Jewish communities. If they had to move or were forced out - these were cities within a city, some were ghettos - the violin could be transported.

The other thing was that enough of them were craftsmen so that they could make one; making a piano is quite another story. Transporting a piano would be more of a problem. You can understand somebody being a fiddler on the roof; but a pianist on the roof is impossible.

Ward: You never played the violin - why?

LG: The piano was enough. Hardly got around playing that too much.

Ward: Have you ever heard of the monotonic ear as compared to the polytonic ear?

LG: Having absolute, true pitch, you mean?

Ward: No - polytonic; for example, the possibility to make chords, a combination of sounds whereas monotonic is just one sound.

LG: Single notes. There are those who will tell you that learning a violin is easier, once you have picked up the technique of fingering, because you are playing single notes. I have always been convinced that somebody who plays a monotonic instrument, as you define it, would have a much easier time say, playing in a chamber music group than a pianist, because the reading of single notes obviously moves much more quickly. It's like reading everything monosyllabically.

Ward: Well, did you use the piano, or your talent for it, psychologically? For instance, when you were angry or when you were upset, that sort of thing?

LG: Later on, yes, not then. There were times when I resented it, even, because I didn't consider it quite as important as baseball. Other times I did. I think better teachers would have made a lot of difference. If you start learning piano by rote, it's hardly anything of a challenge at all.

Ward: But your finger dexterity?

LG: That becomes a fascinating thing by itself; in some ways I would enjoy more playing scales more than the stuff by rote. The family would finally say, "For Christ sakes, stop the scales. Play some music."

The finger dexterity in itself would be a challenge, you see, to see how fast you can travel and do it without making any mistakes. But even there I don't recall being taught enough about minors or majors and chords and things of that sort; know how to transpose - make that transition between a major and a minor, which I learned something about later on.

I don't think I was all that fond of the piano teacher. As a matter of fact, I caught him sort of napping at the end of the day. He had a rough time -

Ward: This was your first teacher you're talking about?

LG: Yeah - the rest I learned by myself. After a while, I found it more fun to pick out tunes. I didn't know enough about the various keys, so I played most of my tunes in the same key.

Ward: What was your favorite key?

LG: That was the key of A. I must have been at the tail end of his schedule. That poor bastard had to make his living in that short period of time between the kids getting out of school and the kids going to dinner.

In an unusual case he could get a family who would take lessons after dinner. But then, of course, you would run into all kinds of problems.

LG: If the old man has had a rough day, he might want to hit the kip and go to sleep. One thing he can do without is a piano lesson.

Ward: Quite an education you got!

LG: Yes. At least I did learn to read music a bit out of that. I like the piano in the sense that it was a love, not just for the instrument, but what could be done with it. You see, there are still those who figure that the piano had -

(Interview 2: 21 February, 1978)

Ward: Lou, we were talking about the piano and your love for it and you were caught in the middle of a sentence there -

LG: Oh, yes. There had been a running controversy as to whether the kind of music that could be gotten out of a piano is better than what's gotten out of a string instrument. There is no question that a vibrato on a violin has a certain emotional quality to it. There's an expression among Jews that "he's a good violinist because he's playing from the heart." In other words, a really emotional instrument.

Ward: Mischa Elman? (famous violinist)

LG: Yes, Mischa Elman is a good example. The argument went that the piano is primarily a percussion instrument, which it is. That argument has gone on over the years. I've never felt that it had that much validity because if you listen to a good pianist such as a Richter or a Gilels (Sviatoslav Richter, Emil Gilels, Russian pianists), there's no question that what they can get out of that instrument is enormous. I think it measures up to all the standards of a violin or a cello.

Ward: Did you ever hear Horowitz? (Vladimir Horowitz, Russian pianist).

LG: Yes, I've heard Horowitz play and I was lucky enough to hear people like Bauer (Harold Bauer), who had been a violinist and then later, at the age of around 30, decided to become a pianist.

I was quite lucky because even as a kid we used to go down to the concerts and to the theatre. In many cases, I was sort of in tow by my sister. I liked the theatre very much; liked the concerts. I recall going to the Eva LeGallienne Theatre. They had this repertory theatre something like ACT, (American Conservatory Theatre). They had a wide variety of material and you could sit in the upper balcony. They were not regular seats; they were benches and that was 25 cents. So we had the chance to see at least a part of the legitimate theatre. And I recall going to some of the Yiddish theatres - the Yiddish Art Theatre I believe it was - to see some of the Yiddish plays. I still recollect as a youngster being highly shaken up by this dramatic thing called "The Dibbuk" -

Ward: What does it mean?

LG: The Dibbuk was literally an unchained soul - a soul that was still wandering and could not find its peace. There were all kinds of things that went with that play; to a youngster it was quite an experience, a bit frightening with all the off-stage noises.

Ward: How old were you when you were so shaken up?

LG: I'd say I was around 11 or 12. I remember going down to listen to Polly Adler, who was one of the first of the great Jewish women comediennes, as well as doing some singing.

This, I think, was one of the fundamental diversions for many Jews. Something like the Jewish Art Theatre in Yiddish represented a major outing, an opportunity to see something that they felt meaningful, in the same way that a reading of Sholem Aleichem would be. They wouldn't pay so much attention to some of the other things which, on the other hand, my sister was very fond of. She was growing up in an entirely different environment, particularly around Hunters College.

Ward: She was interested in other things besides Jewish drama and folklore?

LG: Right. It was through her that I got a chance to get introduced to things such as the theatre and the Philharmonic; we'd go to that. They also had specials, and that included students at very low fee. The idea that kids would have to pay the same for tickets that adults would was ludicrous. Of all the times to be introduced to something like the theatre or the ballet or symphony, that's the age.

Ward: You never forget it. Did you ever think of becoming a professional musician or actor?

LG: Not really. I wasn't that good a musician.

Ward: No desire to walk the boards and declaim?

LG: No, my only acting experience was being dragooned into a part in an amateur theatrical. This was when I was at Berkeley, though. I think it was "The Lower Depths".

The Work Ethic

LG: One other thing I might mention: even when I was a youngster there was -- I guess for want of a better word-what you'd call a work ethic. Even as a kid you started making some side money. I'm not sure that it had to do with dire need on the part of the family, because I don't recall my sister ever looking for part-time work. In my case it was just sort of taken for granted; I don't recall being pushed into it.

At first you'd pick up a couple of bucks by distributing circulars door to door in the Bronx. Somebody had a sale on someplace; a little bit like our local merchant papers. We got paid a dollar per thousand - something like that. Later on I recall getting a job as a page boy at the library. That didn't pay a great deal, but I enjoyed the work there; being around books was pleasant and the librarians were very helpful --

Ward: This was in the local neighborhood library?

LG: Neighborhood library, yes, public library. When I was about 15, 16 perhaps; I got a job working in a shoe store for awhile. There was always some sort of part-time work; it was easy to come by in those days. Life didn't seem to be quite that rough in terms of making a living.

Ward: You didn't have to turn your pay over when you got home?

LG: No, although sometimes if I'd had a full day's work I'd never hesitate to give it to my mother; she'd sort of parcel it back out to me. It was not a business of my saying, "Here's my share of support to the family". I never felt that.

Ward: What'd you do with this money you earned? Did you save it, or did you go out and whiff it away?

LG: I don't recall either saving it or whiffing it away. It could go for something very essential, such as a baseball glove, which wasn't cheap, and a new pair of sneakers. I don't think that there was that much interest in buying things. It didn't occur, for example, to go out to buy an automobile, like kids think of now; putting their money away to buy that second-hand car. Getting a pair of ice skates would.

Ward: That was possible?

LG: Sure, that was possible, realistic; and it was something you definitely used and enjoyed. There was no feeling of trying to buy something so you could just look at it, or just say you owned it.

Ward: Did you have money enough to last between paydays, or were you broke half a day after you got the money?

LG: Well, we didn't use that much money. What for? I was going to high school at the time. Hadn't been to college yet; when I went to college I'd need money, yes, for carfare; and you bought some of your books, not many.

LG: There were some nominal fees, but very small. Then you needed some cents, yes, particularly in case you wanted to buy a sandwich and hadn't brought your lunch along. In high school you didn't have the hangouts that the kids have today - a Macdonald's, or a Jack-in-the-Box or something. There a certain amount of money is essential, if for no other reason than peer status. About the nearest thing to it would be the small candy stores which prevailed all through the neighborhood then.

If there were some essential things you wanted, those would be available. Getting a new baseball was a big thing. We used one until, believe me, it lost all spin and all liveliness and was sewn up around a dozen times and hardly resembled a baseball; to get a really round one was rare! These things we considered to be fairly substantial expenditures. What they cost I don't remember.

By the way, you asked me about my dad or the family, as to whether there was any feeling of my dad being a tyrant. He wasn't; although to say that there wasn't punishment in the family would be false. There was. And again there was a division of labor.

The mother was in charge of the house, the children, keeping them clothed, keeping them well, keeping them fed. The mother was also in charge of keeping track of the kids; whether they were doing their piano practice, or whether they were listening and being cooperative.

Yet, in the event that any discipline was called for, it was the father who was called upon to administer it. You always had that division in the family. And there were times when some of us would get completely wound up in some local game or something that you never got home in time for dinner. Or you'd been particularly mischievous that day.

LG: Then the head of the family, the father, would be called upon, and he'd give you a strap across your bottom. If it was called for, you would get it; that's all. But none of this gives me any feeling of the kind of corporal punishment that people talk about, behind the woodshed.

Ward: Well, did your mother ever say - "Wait until your father gets home"?

LG: Oh, you'd hear that once in a while. Sure.

Ward: You said your family was strict about some things. What would they be?

LG: Homework - that had to be done, period. I guess a good deal of the tempo was already set by my older sister. She was a good scholar and highly devoted to it. They were strict about the whole business of practicing on something like the piano. If they could calculate the results, I don't know.

I think that was one of the reasons for these periodic recitals, to prove to the family that something had been accomplished. In these areas they were strict. They were strict in a general law-abiding way; this was not law-abiding in any redneck fashion - none of "that's the law".

Ward: What about bad language?

LG: Bad language was not acceptable around the house. The business of the kids getting mixed up with the wrong crowd - word would travel very fast in the neighborhood that some of the kids were making a quick buck by, oh, looking for a drunk and rolling him.

I can remember as a child, some guy probably pretty well gone, standing on an iron grill that led to cellars all along the streets, and one of the kids was taunting him a bit; asked him if he had any change in his pocket. He must have said, "Sure," and took out a handful of change. One of the kids whacked the change all the way down to the cellar, and one of the kids went down and picked it all up.

LG: These were things that were definitely frowned upon. On the one hand, to them a picket line was a legal, unquestioned institution that should never be challenged. If the cops took out after the pickets, their attitude was they were just a bunch of Cossacks and strikebreakers; it was their own concept of the law.

Ward: Was there any occasion when the cop was a friend rather than an enemy?

LG: Not particularly, really.

Ward: If there was any trouble, you solved it among yourselves?

LG: Solved it among ourselves. There was a good deal of carryover from the old country, a general feeling among Jews that you don't take your headaches to the court or to the man. You try to resolve them among yourselves. There are endless Jewish stories about attempts to resolve disputes by going to the rabbi.

Ward: Partnerships, I imagine?

LG: Partnerships, domestic quarrels, arguments over property; in the old country there apparently was always some sort of a structure there where you settle these things through your peer. If it wasn't a religious person it was some person who had standing in the community.

Ward: The rabbi usually had quite a bit to do with mediation, didn't he?

LG: The rabbi at one time was the mediator and he was the interpreter of the Jewish law - whether it was written out or not.

One other little item about my mother. She was a very, very strong woman. When she determined to move, or do something, she'd do it.

A little bit of local knowledge: one of the delicacies was a good herring, what they called a "schmaltz" herring. These herring were soaked

LG: in brine, and they would come in barrels, a barrel being maybe three feet tall; big, round barrel. They came from somewhere in Europe. The idea was to get a schmaltz herring that wasn't all bones. It had to be good and fat.

I recall going shopping with my mother; a barrel of schmaltz herring was there, and some of the Jewish women there were trying to get the fattest schmaltz herrings. Naturally they would get down to the bottom of the barrel, so that before long the herring that had been at the bottom were all up at the top. The heavier herring, I guess, would have a tendency to go to the bottom of the barrel.

Ward: The fat ones?

LG: Right. My mother would do her shopping and let the other women pick over these herrings; when she was ready to buy herrings she would just take the one on top, because by that time all the bottom ones were on top. There are some people who simply sit and wait and have a certain amount of patience until that turnover takes place in a situation.

Ward: You were very fond of her, apparently.

LG: I was fond of both of them.

Ward: It must have been a good family.

LG: I think it was, really, in that there was a good relationship. Look at that table over there, in the dining room. My dad made that for me. And there was another table that he made. When Terry and I first set up house - not when we lived on Telegraph Hill, it was later during the time we lived on Green Street that she wanted this table. She went by Gump's and they showed her this table. This was it.

My dad happened to be up here visiting, so he came down and took a look at it, and says "Sure". So we bought the lumber, all maple or birch, and even then it ran quite a bit a square foot. This table was turned out. It cost around fifty bucks instead of five hundred dollars, which it would have been at Gump's.

Ward: Well, are you ready to go on to -- ?

LG: Sure.

Ward: Did you have any particular major in mind when you started at CCNY?

LG: Not particularly, because as I recall you didn't select a major, really, until after your sophomore year. All your freshman courses were the same, compulsory.

Ward: When the time came along when you could select a major, what did you think of, select?

LG: At that time I selected economics and political science.

Ward: I would have guessed that.

LG: Yes. Although how much of that work I'd done at CCNY I -- I don't think it was a great deal. I think most of the time I spent at CCNY was pretty well with the established courses.

Ward: How long did you go to CCNY?

LG: I went there for a year and a half. I entered there in the winter of 1926-27; I'd be about sixteen and a half. I was there until the finishing up of the spring semester in 1928.

Ward: Was there anything particular about that year and a half that you wish to reminisce about?

Leftwing Politics

LG: A couple of things that struck me about CCNY I still recall with considerable fondness. One was the alcoves, as they call them. There was a sort of a large dining area made up of little alcoves where different groups would sort of hang out or just sit around in bull sessions. The amount of discussion that went on there -- and it was almost

LG: always political - was amazing.

It was during that period where a lot of the things that I had already begun to take up in different ways - partially through the family, partially through their friends, and partially things that I had read - began to jell. Here were a lot of bright, bright youngsters -- no question about that -- most of the time I just sat and listened - -

Ward: These were working class neighborhood boys and girls, weren't they, pretty much?

LG: CCNY at that time was a boys' school.

Ward: Oh, it was a boys' school?

LG: Right. The girls went to Hunters - Hunters College. CCNY was a boys' school, and I'd say that at least 80 percent of them came from working class families. And 100 percent of them came either on foot, by subway or train - or by bus. Anything such as somebody owning a car was unknown.

Ward: Bicycles?

LG: Some bicycles, yes, a few. Strictly a streetcar college, that's what it was. And the school had a reputation of turning out some very, very bright students; still does.

Political debate was really beginning to rage at that time. It was after the Russian revolution in 1917. It was after the formation of the Communist party, even though the Socialist party was still a large and rival group.

It was still during the period of Norman Thomas, (a Socialist leader) a very colorful and effective advocate for whatever he was thinking about, talking about. It was still during the period of Eugene V. Debs. I think he was still around.

LG: By that time I think that some of these factional breaks that later consumed so much of the time of the whole left, such as the Lovestoneites (a faction that abandoned the Communists to follow Leon Trotsky) -

Ward: Oh, the Lovestoneites?

LG: Yes, after there had been a split in the party.

Ward: Jay Lovestone (leader of the pro-Trotsky group)?

LG: Jay Lovestone, right. The whole Trotsky thing had come to a head in the Soviet Union around 1924, '25, so that by '26 that was also being debated. These were not quiet arguments. They were real screaming drills and they'd go on endlessly.

One thing you had to admire; the youngsters who were taking part in it did their homework and when they debated their case it was not just a vitriolic expression, not just to overwhelm the other person by yelling them down - that didn't get very far. That was an education all by itself, just as much as the classes. There was so much coming through in the way of political discussion, debate, about World War I, which was not that far behind us . . . .

Ward: Sacco and Vanzetti were coming up?

LG: I don't think Sacco and Vanzetti had been arrested at that time; they might have been.

Ward: Well, the Red raids had occurred; they must have been something that was talked about.

LG: The Palmer raids - Palmer - yes, they had occurred. I recall discussions about the Wobblies, (members of the Industrial Workers of the World) even though they were primarily located on the west coast. They had come east and led some of the big strikes, such as the one at Paterson, New Jersey; also in Lawrence, Mass.

Ward: That was the one I was thinking of. John Reed (famous radical writer) had to do with both of them, at least Paterson, I know -

LG: Those were among the shoemakers and textile workers of the day. The Wobblies had come east for these battles; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (famous woman radical) was very active. There were discussions about the Wobblies and their peculiar type of tradition, their own contribution, an odd thing.

I found it very difficult to accept the nature of the Wobblies. To me it was a strange thing that guys, for example, thought nothing of being on the road all the time, of riding the rods. Why? Because to a kid raised in New York City, a freight train was a rare thing to see. If you saw any trains at all, it was these passenger trains that went on to Yonkers and that section above the Bronx, and primarily along Park Avenue. They had subterranean trains, you'd see them once in a while.

Ward: You didn't run away from home at any time, did you?

LG: No, like every kid you always think about it, but the whole idea of this kind of existence . . . . We're city people.

There was actually no feeling of the land, even though my mother made a heroic effort to get the kids a bit of fresh air during the summer vacation time, partly to escape the heat. I recall we spent several summers in a little town in the Catskills, off the Hudson River, called Accord.

Ward: This has a political significance to me; a homogeneous group in this town, or what?

LG: Not particularly; a lot of them knew each other. In those days you didn't read about these places. It went by word of mouth. One person knew about it and told another person.

Ward: The patrons mostly Jews?

LG: Primarily, and not all of them of the same mind, because you'd hear political debates going on constantly. Some of the families might know each other, or at least a few of them did - some of them did not.

LG: This was a place that the family could afford, which is important. It got you out of the city during some of the hot summer weeks. As I recall, she worked awfully hard, because this was not the kind of a summer camp where everyone was served food. There was no kitchen help. The women shared the kitchen, and that was not always a happy thing.

Ward: In other words, who got the stove, who got the sink?

LG: Right. Three or four women in the kitchen - and I don't care what generation or what they are - always get the same results; not very happy ones so there was a great deal of work for the family.

Actually, it was a pleasant enough place. We would get picked up at the railroad station by the farmer or the guy who owned the place, with a horse and wagon, and taken off to the farm. That was the chance we had to see something of another world; it was not a city . . . .

Ward: Cows?

LG: There were cows around; horses -

Ward: Milk didn't come in - ?

LG: Glass bottles, right. We knew it couldn't come in those big gallon cans because we couldn't figure out how a cow could sit on one of those. They weren't gallon cans, they were about ten gallons. You've seen them - for a long time the farmers used to use them to transport their milk.

They were a source of continuous enjoyment for the kids. One of the major games that the kids would play was how many of these things could you jump over - line up two, three, four; the object being to jump, hit the last one with your hands and still make it. Whether any permanent damage was done to some vital parts, I'm not sure.

Ward: Was milk homogenized then?

LG: You mean pasteurized?

Ward: No, homogenized. You saw the cream rise?

LG: Yes, you saw the cream rise. At one time you used to go down to the corner to pick up your milk. I recall once my dad being a bit irritated at everybody, including the kids, because he had to go get the milk; so he went down to the grocery store and had the man put a quart of milk in a brown paper bag and carried it home that way. My mother was not enthusiastic but he thought it was funny as heck.

But later, during the winter, by that time they were delivering milk bottles. It was terribly cold on Jackson Avenue and the milk in the bottle would begin to freeze. The paper top on the bottle was about two inches above the bottle itself because it was all cream. The mothers separated the cream from the milk; they used it for things like cream with their coffee or their tea.

Ward: All right, that explains why it was difficult to relate to riding the box cars and the other reasons why it was difficult to relate to the Wobblies, more fundamental than the means of transportation.

LG: The other one was this whole concept of their being on the move constantly. They'd move from lumber camps, say, to places like hop fields, or work in the mines. Not in the coal mines - I'm talking now about the western mines. These were a little bit difficult to relate to. Later on, I began to understand a great deal more about it.

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Ward: Okay, Lou, now with the Wobblies, did they talk to you about the use of violence?

LG: At that time? No, that was later on. I didn't get to know any Wobblies when I was in New York City. I first met some on the west coast.

Ward: All right, but you heard people talk about the Wobblies. Did they talk about the Wobblies' feelings and about the propriety of using violence?

LG: I don't recall. After all, during the Palmer raids there was a lot of violence, but the violence was against the Wobblies. I'm not sure whether John Dos Passos, (an author) had come out at that time with 42nd Parallel.

We were more accustomed to things like those grisly stories about what the vigilantes did to the Wobblies, like the story of Wesley Everest (a Wobbly). He was hung under one of the railroad bridges.

Ward: Who? Wesley what?

LG: Wesley Everest - that was in the Northwest, I think in Centralia -

Ward: But this Wesley Everest - that name is unfamiliar. It strikes me that you're discussing all these divisions among the left; were there any capitalist-minded kids at CCNY?

LG: If there were, they sure as heck weren't in that alcove. They were in some other part of the building.

Ward: And never the twain shall meet. Is that it?

LG: I don't know. It could be that they didn't spend any time in the alcoves, that their interests and thinking were somewhere else.

No, I don't recall any kids holding forth on the beauties of the capitalist system. I think that would be pretty rare in any school, even today. Though a lot of people are in favor of it and completely conditioned by it, I don't think they carry it on their sleeve.

Ward: So that's the way it was. If there were pro-capitalist arguments, they were not much in evidence.

LG: You'd get more of those in the classroom; with studies of Adam Smith and the principles of free enterprise; in the economic subjects, there you would get it, but not in the alcoves, not among the youngsters.

Ward: What about the professors? Were there any professors that made lasting impressions on you?

LG: Only two that I can recall. One of them was not a professor of mine - he was the head of the Music Department and a good organist. They had an excellent organ at CCNY - beautiful thing - and he made it a practice to play almost every afternoon, everything; a lot of the Bach which is written for organ; the fugues, preludes. Those were wonderful afternoons, just sitting around and listening to him for an hour or two.

There was a professor I had in Public Speaking, a very competent man and also a good person in his thinking about things.

Ward: At that time were you doing any public speaking or identified with it?

LG: No.

Ward: Did you try to imitate him?

LG: I tried to imitate him very consciously in terms of some of the things he hammered away at that make up what people call "New Yorkese."

Ward: You mean like "thoid"?

LG: Yes, like "Thoid Street" and "goink", the k's instead of g's. He had these things figured out, and he was determined that if some youngster got through his course at least he would speak something that people in other parts of the country could understand. He might have had some background or training in New England. In retrospect, I think a lot of his speech more closely resembled Bostonians than anyone else.

Ward: Mass Ave.

LG: Right. Another feature of the school which in itself manifested general rebellious feelings among the students, ROTC was compulsory, partially because

LG: of federal grants, or the method in which the school was set up, just like in the state college system.

Ward: By law?

LG: Right. Every youngster had to take ROTC and there was Lewisohn Stadium, right alongside. That's the place where they used to have the summer concerts; it was also the athletic field, the place where the ROTC would practice. In very inclement weather they would try to have ROTC drill in tunnels that went beneath the buildings of CCNY, so that you wouldn't have to walk through rain or snow to go from one building to another building.

It was one of the most ludicrous things that the school could do. The kids were mostly violently opposed to the whole system of compulsory military training, a lot of them on political grounds; a lot of them were just pacifists; and then there were some kids who could think of nothing but some form of mischief.

A few incidents stand out in my mind. Every time they would have parade drill or whatever it was; "march in squads," "right turn," "left turn" or "to the rear march," there would always be one or two kids there who would take these rolled leggings that came out of World War I that looked like a big Ace bandage - same size. If you put the thing on right, it would stay up, but there would always be a couple of kids there who would see that they weren't fastened properly; soon as the parade would start, sure enough they would become unravelled. You could just see the scene there with somebody stepping on those things every few steps; the whole parade would fall apart. Pretty soon the man in charge would blow his cork.

I remember another incident where we were doing ROTC in one of these tunnels. Some youngster complained that they couldn't try a bayonet drill.

LG: A hard-headed leader said: "Oh, we can try it, we're not going to try any fancy stuff, you know, any charging or crap like that." They had no sooner started the drill when some kid started screaming and yelling, holding his eye saying somebody had stabbed him (laughter). Nothing of the sort had happened, but the whole thing broke up in consternation.

I had a feeling that the instructors there realized that ROTC was not taking on at CCNY, that this would never be an outstanding example of how it should be done.

The president of the school towards the last year when I was there - I think he was named Robinson - the director or the president . . . There had been a clash between the administration and some students who were determined to hold a demonstration. What it was all about, I don't know. It might have been a general free speech thing. Apparently, he lost his cool and attacked the demonstration with his umbrella; from then on he picked up the name of "Umbrella Robinson". They would never refer to him in any other way. How long he lasted, I don't know.

If I had been in charge of the school, there's one thing I don't think I could have won; that was an open clash with the students - it could not be done.

Ward: How many young men were there?

LG: I don't think it was all that big. The figure of 1500 stands out in my mind. I think it has become larger since. You had a number of other schools there that were considered more desirable; there was NYU (New York University), Columbia, not too far away, Fordham, Cornell - universities all around there.

Ward: Well, why did you go to CCNY? It was the nearest to you?

LG: Nearest my home, right, and also, no tuition. Nobody felt that it was a lower calibre school. I think most of the CCNY students and graduates felt that if you could survive CCNY, you could survive the world.

Ward: Oh, I see - great pride.

LG: Right. You have that in the whole school structure to this day. For example, Stanford students have a tendency to downgrade Cal students. You find that even in high schools; Lowell students in San Francisco have a tendency to play down a place like Poly High.

Ward: Scholastic nationalism?

LG: Scholastic nationalism; and a lot of it reflects economic background and things of that sort.

II ON TO CALIFORNIA

Education, Work, Political Action

Ward: So, after a year and a half, what happened? You left CCNY, why?

LG: Well, what happened was this. My father had been with the studios beginning quite early in the whole film-making -

Ward: In New York?

LG: In New York. I remember he worked for the old Biograph. He even worked for a while with the old Crystal Films, and I remember going with him to the Hearst Cosmopolitan Studios.

Ward: He was a cabinet maker. What did he do for the studios?

LG: In those days they built all their sets. Movies were made indoors other than Westerns, which were called "locations". The challenge to a good cabinet maker was to build any kind of a set that was called for. To him this was a continuous, almost daily challenge to his abilities as a cabinet maker and carpenter. There was nothing he couldn't make of wood, except maybe a wool carpet. If he was given a picture, for example - and in many cases they were not given blueprints, just pictures, although he had taught himself how to read blueprints and he had taught himself English.

Ward: And he could turn out a French provincial chair or a Louis XIV -

LG: That's right, or a curved stairway which was supposed to be the set of a mansion. He could do all these things. I'm not sure what year he went to work for the studios. My hunch is that it was around 1914, maybe later. I recall taking some expeditions with my father, either to the Biograph Films or to Ashbury Park for a so-called "location," or to the Hearst Cosmopolitan. By that time I must have been ten or eleven; he had already been with the motion picture industry for some time.

About 1924 a number of the studios were beginning to close in New York City. The boom was taking place in Hollywood and some of the big studios had already been set up in Hollywood; Paramount Films, Warner Brothers, Fox.

My father decided to take a look at the Hollywood scene. He had a chance to work there with a new company called Tec-Art. That was located on Melrose not too far away from Paramount, across the street. He went out there, not as a partner but it was some sort of small shares in the outfit; he was in charge of construction as well as working in the carpenter shop. He was a hard worker.

I'm not saying he hadn't done other cabinet work. He and some other chap went into home building, but obviously he didn't like it much and he went back to the studios. So, after 1924, he began to go out to Hollywood, except for visits home, particularly around the summer, primarily to see whether the studios were going to take hold there. It was doubtful whether many of them would hang on in New York City.

By 1928, he had concluded that New York City was washed up in terms of motion pictures and that he definitely would move out to the west coast. So in 1928 the entire family moved out to the west coast.

Ward: I see, so then you went to UCLA? Whereabouts did you settle in L. A.?

LG: It was one of the larger motel courts.

Ward: What part of town would that be?

LG: It was in Hollywood. We were not there too long before we moved out to this place on Beachwood. I think it was 2626 or 2626½, a large flat in one of these four-flat affairs, and fairly comfortable.

I went to UCLA in the fall of 1928, the September semester. At that time it was located on Vermont; sort of the border between Hollywood and Los Angeles. You were a few blocks away, so that it was an easy trip; sometimes if you felt energetic you could walk home. I was at the Vermont campus until it moved over to Westwood.

Ward: The Janss Investment Company . . . ?

LG: That's right - the Janss Investment Company; this was the subject of a great deal of discussion at Vermont, as to how much Janss was making on the thing. The land on which UCLA is now located was contributed by Janss at Westwood because that then would give the Janss properties a chance to develop all around it.

Ward: How long were you at Vermont?

LG: My recollection is that I was only there about half a year. Maybe it was a year, but I sort of doubt it. It could very well have been that it was around January-February of 1929.

Ward: At the height of the boom?

LG: Oh, yes, it was still the boom period and many of us felt that the move out to Westwood was to get rid of all the poor kids.

Ward: Mmmm - that made a difference to you, coming from Beachwood to Westwood?

LG: Or any part of Los Angeles. On the Vermont campus, you had kids from all over Los Angeles, including as far away as Boyle Heights; they could make it by

LG: street car. We had a fairly good street car system, and it wasn't all that expensive. Westwood was another story. The nearest you could get to the campus was on Wilshire and that was quite a walk from there.

Ward: Oh, yes - some ten blocks or so.

LG: Eight or ten blocks, right. Then there was the whole business of eating; if you were stuck late going to the library, there was no way of going home and getting some dinner and coming back. So, there was a good deal of feeling that this was an attempt to upgrade the school by automatic, economic elimination. But we went out there, all right.

Ward: Did the family move?

LG: No, the family stayed exactly where they were on Beachwood.

Ward: That was handy for your father with the studios?

LG: Right. From where we lived on Beachwood, it couldn't have been more than five, ten minutes to work. By that time he had a car, and even when he went to work at other studios they were all within reasonable distance. Westwood was another story. The only thing close was Westwood itself, or places like Beverly Hills, and nobody in the family was giving any thought to living in Beverly Hills.

Ward: What about the student body that you got into at Vermont? There must have been a great difference between that and CCNY. There were no "alcoves", for instance.

LG: There were no alcoves, but the student body I got to know pretty quickly. Many of them came from a similar cultural and economic background like - oh, the kids that came out of Boyle Heights.

My folks knew some of the people out there; again, I think, because of their cultural ties. It wasn't too long before they had one of their organizations going - old friends - the people who came from Kovna

LG: or around there; Lithuanians in the main. The youngsters from those families were also at UCLA, so that this group gravitated pretty quickly towards each other.

Ward: So, you didn't feel uprooted?

LG: I did in part. I got to be very fond of New York City as a youngster. I walked almost every inch of it. I didn't think too much, for example, of starting off at home and walking the whole length of Manhattan down to the Bowery, taking different streets each time so that one time I'd be going through Yorkville and another time going over towards Columbia and then walking down.

You could take the subway back from the Bowery and for a nickel you were home again. I got to be very fond of the city, so fond that in the summer of 1929 I took off and went back to New York.

Ward: Oh, that was after you had been in college a year?

LG: I had been at UCLA about a year. You bought a ride by sharing gas, very common. I forget what my share was. I had been working in Hollywood and I was saving up some money. Perhaps I had this at the back of my mind, plus the fact that towards the latter part of that year my father decided to get rid of an old 1924 Buick; I inherited the thing, so transportation was a bit better. Running a car was a bit cheaper in those days -

Ward: You were working?

LG: I worked around the studios on holidays, in part.

Ward: What kind of work were you doing?

LG: They called me a "grip", but actually it was laborer's work, helping to rig sets, working along the catwalks and things of that sort.

Ward: So you had the old Buick and you were saving some money and you wanted to go to New York?

LG: Yes, I bought my way to New York, sharing driving and so forth. Whoever the guy was who owned the car was in a hurry to get there because I don't remember stopping along the way. We slept in the car; stopped for a meal once in a while and go to the can. We just drove day and night. It took a little over four days, driving day and night along Highway 66; north around the Panhandle to that part of Texas that tied on to another highway, and got to New York.

I worked in New York for a couple of months, selling shoes; that was it; I had done some of that in Hollywood. You did all kinds of odd things. So, I sort of got it out of my system - the homesickness - and thought I might as well come back, which I did.

I had left before the semester was finished in 1929: when I got back there was a question as to whether I would move on. The profs I was talking to agreed I could go on the next semester, because by that time I would have been a junior.

Then at the end of that semester I took both the exams for the previous semester and the ones for the semester I was in. I was able to make it up all right; there was no great problem. The general attitude of the school was that they weren't all that anxious to lose students.

Ward: They weren't nit-picking?

LG: No. Bear in mind that Westwood was still considered the southern branch; people from up here never talked about UCLA. They simply talked about the southern branch of the University of California.

Ward: So, you got into the junior year all right?

LG: I got into the junior year all right. I was taking economics, accounting - -

Ward: Accounting?

LG: Yes; I decided that it wouldn't do me any harm. I might learn something.

Ward: Some poli sci (political science)?

LG: A little bit of that, right. Those were the principal subjects; got to meet a number of friends, who continued friends. It was about that time that I met Aubrey Grossman (who became an attorney for American Indians, etc.) - 1928; it could very well be that that was when he started UCLA. Aubrey is a few years younger than I am.

By that time the campus was a little more livable; when we first moved out there about the only things that were completed were Royce Hall and the Library; not even the Student Union Building. All of it - it was built out of brick on what amounted to barren dunes. I recall a number of professors talking quite openly that Janss had really made himself a deal because the university was on an earthquake fault. Whether they were right or wrong, I don't know. So far it's still there.

Ward: So are the buildings.

LG: Right. One of the reasons they were arguing so much about brick is that brick is one of the few things that cannot withstand an earthquake worth a damn; but that wasn't our problem at the time. Dust. The wind would blow out there and the dust was just unbelievable. It would fill the cars, and you would find yourself shutting the windows, shutting the doors --

Ward: Suffocating?

LG: Yeah, suffocating. Now it is a very pleasant university because they have done a great job landscaping, a lot of grass around there, although the buildings have gotten pretty crowded together. But there were no dorms there at the time. Some people were just beginning to build apartments and downtown Westwood had the first few shops, including an ice cream parlor. It was a sort of headquarters for the kids.

Ward: So, economics, poli sci, accounting. By that time you were getting close to coming of age, huh?

LG: Yes, by that time I was 19. It was while I was at UCLA that my political thinking began to fall into place; not just myself, but also a number of my friends.

LG: There was Aubrey, there was May Solomon, Corinne Silver, - some others; most of them were from similar backgrounds; some of the people in some of the fraternities; oh, guys like Percy Solotoy, who later took over this company Brown-Saltzman, furniture builders. Percy remained a friend for many, many years. I knew his wife very well - Sonya. She died some years later - cancer.

Percy belonged to one of the fraternities; so did Joe Aidlin. They had a fraternity house near the Vermont campus, because I remember going over there during one of their rushing periods. Decided pretty quickly that I could do without it; just wasn't my scene, period.

A number of youngsters, both at Vermont and then at UCLA, were part of the Young Communist League. Some were also members of the "Blue Blouses," I think they were called.

Ward: "Blue Blouses"? That would indicate a Russian - ?

LG: No. They just wore a blue blouse that was like a work shirt; they had small singing groups and acting groups - things they put together for meetings. I heard about an organization called Young Pioneers; that, I gather, was centered primarily around Boyle Heights; part of the Jewish community.

Ward: Oh - was Meyer Baylin a - ?

LG: Meyer Baylin was part of that group. Baylin did not go to UCLA as far as I know. One reason I remember Meyer Baylin is because Meyer Baylin was one of those who unofficially closed the Olympic Games when they jumped out of the stands and ran around the track - not at Olympic speed - with "Free Tom Mooney" signs on them. That must have been 1932.

Ward: Yes - it was.

LG: They went from there right to the city jail, and Meyer Baylin --

Ward: Oh, and Leo Gallagher; he got fired from some little university where he was a law professor because he defended them, (and who later defended Georgi Dimitrov in the Reichstag Fire trial).

LG: He defended them, right. I got to know Leo Gallagher later on. A marvelous old guy; and Al Wirin -

Ward: Gallagher was a devout Catholic . . .

LG: Yes; and he and Al Wirin (a prominent Los Angeles attorney) worked closely together, you recall. Al Wirin was active in the Civil Liberties Union. He died a few days ago. So, I began to meet a number of these youngsters and of course the political discussions were going full blast.

Ward: You found more anti-radical sentiment at UCLA than you did at CCNY, didn't you?

LG: I'm not sure that it was so much anti as indifferent. The professor didn't seem to give so much never mind. Some of them were taken with it because it would liven up some of those classes, which were deadly, deadly dull; did not seem to be disturbing to them.

You didn't have anything at the time that resembled an Un-American Activities Committee or organizations of that sort, so there was no fear on the part of the professors. Some of them actually felt, as a professor should, that that is exactly what a school is for; that if it is not a market place for ideas, no place ever will be.

It was during this period that I became active with the politically active kids in many ways. I guess it was my age, getting into that period of life when everything is opening up for you.

Ward: And you had to go to meetings?

LG: A few, although for a while I was primarily interested in doing everything under the sun. I decided I wanted to go back to the piano; luckily picked a professor who really knew a great deal about it. He had been both a musician and also sang with some group in Europe; at least I learned a little bit with him.

LG: I also decided that I ought to stay in good physical shape. It was not only a question of walking almost everywhere; I remember buying a set of weights without any instructions, which was foolish. Weights - you can hurt yourself - -

Ward: Unless you know what you are doing.

LG: Although I got to the point where I could snatch and jerk two hundred pounds. Press is much more difficult. Weights, piano, as well as being in school taking a full program.

My schedule got to be such that while the family was very tolerant, there was only so much they could take. If I decided that in addition to doing my work in school, working out on weights, and doing my hiking, I would start to practice the piano at 10 or 11 o'clock at night - it wouldn't work.

Finally, my dad solved the problem for me. He talked to somebody down at the studios where they had a couple of grand pianos on the sets. So, he said, "Look, you can go practice all you please."

##

LG: I was talking about my schedule which always seemed to run 24 hours a day, or very close. Under this arrangement where I could practice down at the studios, I recall one instance where I must have gotten started pretty late at night. The work crews were just coming in as I was getting through, so it must have been around six o'clock in the morning.

The guy who ran the studio came by and I was practicing something or other and he said, "Look, the guys are about to start work. I don't mind your playing the piano, but play something a little bit faster, something in marching tempo; see if we can get any life around here."

Ward: So you did?

LG: No, I just called it a day.

Ward: Then, you had just about played all night.

LG: No - I don't know what time or how late I started. What I distinctly recall about that whole period was very intense work and activity.

(Interview 3: 28 February, 1978)

Ward: Lou, where did you sleep those days?

LG: When did I sleep or where? I think all young people get the idea that four hours sleep is enough - five hours is plenty. With that kind of a schedule, that was about it.

Most of the time I stayed where my folks lived on Beachwood Drive. Later on, at least a year after that, some of us chipped in and rented a summer cottage or cabin in one of those canyons leading off of Sunset Boulevard. It wasn't Topanga Canyon, but it was in that area, only about five minutes from school. It gave the advantage of being able to sleep there if you worked late at the library or thought you were losing a lot of time on everything else.

It was also a general hangout for some of the kids. The rent on the place was twenty bucks a month, or something like that. By that time I had my father's Buick; it was a sedan with a canvas top.

I remember one time being in a great rush, flying down this canyon, making a turn and the car swaying; the top of the car hit a truck - not the body of the car, just the top; it had these posts that held up the touring top. After thinking about that for a while, I thought I might as well have an open car, so I cut off the entire top and left the wooden base. Well, it became an open five-passenger roadster. It suited me fine, except for the winter weather.

Ward: So you just put on rain gear?

LG: I guess so.

Ward: Do you want to talk about the people who were your companions up there in the little cabin?

LG: Well, I remember some of them who went there; Aubrey was there for a while; Sonya who married Percy Solotoy, used to come by there. Another person, Corinne Silver - I lost track of her. There were a number of others who would come through at one time or another. It was sort of like a hideaway from school, a gathering place.

Ward: You'd call it a commune today, I suppose?

LG: No, I don't think it would be called a commune at any time because there wasn't much work going on around the place. About the nearest thing it came to a commune was sharing the cost of hanging on to it.

Ward: I think you said something about using your education in accounting. You worked for somebody - kept his books?

LG: Yes, I was making some money, at least enough to pay my share and buy gasoline for the car and get books. Gasoline was very, very cheap then. I remember price wars that would reach the point where you got ten gallons for a dollar; offering eleven gallons for a buck, an extra gallon thrown in like a baker's dozen.

Things like clothes weren't all that important; the amount of outside entertainment was miniscule; there was no such thing as going to restaurants to eat. If we wanted food at the shack, we'd fix it ourselves. Groceries were not very expensive either, so that getting by was not that much of a chore.

I managed to get myself a pretty good part-time job; it was either two half days a week or two half days and Saturday. For a while I was hanging on to that job and working also at this shoe place on Hollywood Boulevard.

Ward: You were on your own?

LG: Pretty much on my own, although I still had my room at the house with the folks and spent time there. Anyway, this guy had this drugstore for years, but none of his books had been taken care of. They

LG: actually were in no shape for any kind of an inspection.

Whether it was the Internal Revenue or another government agency that would do periodic inspection of drug stores, I am not sure. It was some federal agency, the primary reason being that the drug stores had become one of the legal outlets for alcohol. I would also help out in the store; but by and large my job was to try to get those books straightened out. After a couple of months of working on it, with the little knowledge I had, at least he had a set of ledgers and some idea where the money was being spent and how much money was being taken in. And this went along okay until one day he came to me and said, "I have cashed this $800 bad check. You'll have to put that down as a bad check." I said, "Frankly, I don't think if anybody goes through those books they're going to believe that."

I'd seen some of these guys coming by there. They were bootleggers who were bringing what I guess was straight alcohol. They'd either sell it that way or mix it a bit; sometimes give it a medicinal name. There were individuals who even had prescriptions from doctors, so that there was always a certain amount of cover going on. But this was a bit too blatant, this $800 check, which was his way of paying off these guys, cashing their checks and then writing them off. He told me: "That's just a plain mistake and that's the way I want it done."

I said, "Well, if you want it done that way, you'd better do it yourself. I don't see any purpose in trying to handle books that way. I don't think the job is worth enough to get myself in that kind of a stupid jam, because if they do come around and inspect your books again - somebody had been around there and decided the books were in fairly good shape - they're not going to ask just you, they're going to ask me 'how in the devil did this $800 bad debt come along?'; ordinarily people like druggists or a grocery store owner won't cash any $800 bad check." No, pretty unusual - -

Ward: Eight dollars maybe, but not $800 --

LG: Eight bucks in those days perhaps, yes, or if you knew somebody very well, make it ten; but 800 bucks was a lot of dough. The net result was that we parted company.

Ward: How much was he paying you?

LG: I think it was somewhere around 30, 35 cents an hour; maybe 40, which in those days was - it sure as heck wasn't big pay or anything, but it wasn't the worst thing around because depression had gotten under way. Bear in mind that this was after the stock market crash, and in those days there was an economic time lag between the east coast and the west coast. The impact of heavy unemployment and everything else had a certain time lag.

Later on it became very manifest in California, just as it did all over the country. There was no minimum wage. It wasn't adopted until 1936-37, thereabouts. I was being paid about all you could expect; for part-time work it wasn't too bad.

Ward: Somehow from previous discussions I get the figure of $15. You worked a lot of hours at 35 - 40 cents an hour to make $15.

LG: Oh, yeah - an awful long time. After all, if you're getting two bits an hour you get 2 bucks a day. I have a figure at the back of my head that I made around $15 a week.

Ward: How long did this type of employment continue?

LG: Oh, I was on that job about six - seven months, and I still got some other work. I would pick up odd jobs in the studios once in a while. Those jobs were dependent on whether I could be available for a full day's work; the studios had no use for part-time people. When they hired somebody, it was for the day.

Ward: Your father would be helpful there, wouldn't he?

LG: Oh, sure; that would happen during vacation periods, holidays and so forth; then I might be able to pick up a couple of bucks. My father, by the way, never

LG: believed there was any purpose in working with him because he could not conceive of any left-hander becoming a carpenter; just no way.

Ward: It's odd that you should be left-handed in everything except writing.

LG: Yes; when I was in school they would practically force you to write right-handed.

Ward: Also at that time you and probably your family, too, maintained some hope that you might become a musician, isn't that so? Professionally?

LG: Not particularly. Among the Jews in those days, a good professional musician - and by that they didn't mean jazz, either - had certain standing and prestige. On the other hand a musician who sort of played around in little bands or nightclubs to make a living, I don't think that ever struck them as a yiddish nachus; nachus is something you enjoy. I don't think they entertained that idea so much.

If anything, they had the usual hopes that some of their children would move into one of the professions. I know that they felt very strongly about my sister's ambitions to not only get a PhD, but to go into teaching, which was the obvious logical step, in the case of a woman particularly. She was doing her work in literature and languages, that's where she wound up too - a very good linguist. I don't think it occurred to them that I had the ability or the talent to become a musician.

Ward: Still, it seems to me that anyone who practices half the night is pretty eager to do something with all that.

LG: No, I was fascinated with the piano; it is a different instrument. People can say, "somebody is an excellent violinist; he can make a violin cry." I've heard some of the greatest pianists in the world, people like Rubenstein (Artur Rubenstein, another famous pianist) and Horowitz, Gilels, Richter, and some of them have been so amazing as to their technique and knowledge that they might bring the piano to its knees, but they could never make it cry.

LG: The fascination with the piano has an awful lot to do with the intricacies of chord structure and everything else. Finger dexterity. I am not sure that some of this practice accomplished all that much. If you had done it first thing in the morning when you woke up and were alert you might pick it up in half the time. The practice itself was an enjoyable thing.

Ward: Obviously, it must have been. So here you were along in your junior year - senior year by that time -

LG: Let's see, I graduated in February 1931, the winter class. I was in my senior year by 1930, yes.

Joining The Young Communists

Ward: So, other things were pulling at you - left-wing politics?

LG: Yes.

Ward: Could you tell me anything about - any interesting circumstances?

LG: I think that by that time a lot of my thinking at least had begun to crystallize. Some of the things that I had heard argued in the alcoves of CCNY, some of the things I had begun to read, were literally being confirmed by the economy; by that time the economic crash had taken place in 1929. Before long you were reading about these enormous unemployment lines and these soup kitchen lines on the east coast.

Everything was adding up to convince anyone who was at all alert that the economic system just wouldn't work. This was being confirmed almost weekly because it wasn't merely a crash of capitalism in this country; all of Europe was equally plagued.

Ward: The western world was all involved -

LG: The only parts of the world that weren't as immediately affected were the colonial world; we knew nothing about it. So little was said about what happened to a country, for example, that depended on the export of ore, while here the steel mills were closed down.

Obviously, the impact on that country must have been unbelievable. Like all colonial countries, they were the source of raw material and a market for finished goods by the controlling country, so they must have gotten the backwash of this same economic situation. Countries like Cuba . . . .

Later I began to do a lot of work on the whole background of sugar, its price fluctuations, market controls, growth areas, exporting as against importing countries. And I found out that in Cuba by the end of 1930 or '31, the price of sugar had gotten down to the point where a sugar worker was paid a sack of rice and a pair of jeans for the season - what's called the "safra". They wouldn't even see money.

Ward: Wait a minute - what's it called?

LG: S A F R A - It's a Spanish word for the harvest period.

Ward: Well, you heard the arguments between the various leftist sects in the alcoves of CCNY -- the followers of Trotsky, the followers of this, that and the other?

LG: Some of those arguments didn't even discuss things like Marx (Karl Marx, famous revolutionary theorist). A lot of those kids must have taken it with their mother's milk because they simply assumed it; they assumed that any knowledgable youngster had to be a Socialist or a left-winger; and in support of Russia and the revolution. Then, obviously, you had to lean toward Communism, which had not taken any form until after the Russian Revolution - or just before, after the breakup between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks.

Ward: Then these kids must have been the children of 1905ers to a considerable extent, yes?

LG: I should think so, yes; and a lot of them carried the endless debates that had gone on in the Eastside right over to CCNY, with practically no interruption except for the subway trip.

Ward: That's quite a political picture. So, along comes someone who says, "Would you like to join the YCL?", I suppose.

LG: Yep.

Ward: You were ready for it?

LG: Yes; everything you saw around you confirmed what was being argued - the feeling at least on the part of the young people I ran around with. The feeling on the part of my folks was very intense anger about the foreign invasions of Russia that followed the 1917 revolution. We all had in mind the armies from 21 different countries that were invading their borders, and a surprising confidence that the Russians could hang on.

Anyway, with this joining there was a lot of intensive reading. We began to go through all the literature - everything from things like Value, Price and Profit to What Is To Be Done, familiar pamphlets. Then there was heavier reading. I began to tackle Das Kapital - at least made it part way through. Later on, I made it the other way through.

We were pretty outspoken on campus about our beliefs. I recall, for example, a raucous debate I got into at a political science class I was taking. I don't think the professor was a bad egg, but people like myself thought, "Here's the goddamn capitalist world falling around your ears and you're talking about political science, which in itself is a contradiction in terms because it is not a science; in effect, nothing but a description of all the techniques of ideal democracy, as they have it envisioned; great textbook stuff.

I made the flat statement that a lot of this stuff was pure bunk, that the government belonged to the people who owned the country; that's how simple it was -

Ward: And - ?

LG: It was a question of power -

Ward: And this professor took issue with you?

LG: Yeah, he thought that the democratic structure offered an opportunity for all people to make their changes through the legislative forms.

My position was very simple; if they could make some changes, how in the hell come we had this depression? Why can't they put people to work? After all, a pair of hands is supposed to be an asset, not a liability.

Sure, very simplistic stuff, but it was still all wrapped up in the conviction that a capitalist economy had these periodic crises. This concept of periodic crises dominated any discussion of political science because the ten year cycle of economic set-back was almost as though it started the same day every ten years going back to 1800.

Ward: Did you go into the generation cycle of wars?

LG: No, except that we began to talk a great deal about things like imperialist wars. We felt that World War I, without any question, was an imperialist war; just a struggle for empires, colonies. Noboby bought this business of the war having started because some archduke got bumped off in Croatia or Yugoslavia or whatever it was -

Ward: Yes, Yugoslavia -

LG: Sarajevo. The interesting thing is that after more than fifty years, a single fact like that still remains in my mind, including the name of the man.

Ward: Well, what kind of a mark did you get from that professor?

LG: I don't recall. I got by all right.

Ward: I asked because you said the debate was rather raucous -

LG: Yes, but I also had a feeling that he was sort of a nice guy; I could expect him to defend what he had been teaching for many years.

Ward: Or do you think he was just protecting his job?

LG: No. This was long before people in the academic field were walking on eggs.

Ward: Well, first of all you had duties. You were assigned stuff to read. And you followed your own inclination, also, in reading. You had to make reports now and then on what you knew and what you were doing, to the YCL?

LG: The big bulk of the sessions that took place comprised not just reports on current events, developments which inevitably ran to the economy in the main; included in many cases were reports on what was happening on the other side of the ocean. And then there was invariably discussion on some piece of literature that everybody was supposed to have read. The discussions were worthwhile; not merely a repetition of what you had read to prove you had read it.

Ward: You attempted to adapt what you had read?

LG: There was always an attempt -

Ward: To describe the whole situation and what you thought and what your comrades thought?

LG: That's right. It wasn't like the kind of discussion you'll sometimes have at the dinner table with a group of friends, all of whom have read the same article in the Nation.

Ward: Well, so it began; a period of demonstrations here and there, little things - ?

LG: Oh, some street meetings, mostly around Hollywood; distribution of leaflets, primarily on the question of unemployment. I think that the Workers' Alliance (an organization of the unemployed) had started by then; urging people to give it a hand. The cops

LG: were not very friendly to meetings; Los Angeles at that time, as I remember, was under the aegis of this guy called Red Hynes (a Los Angeles police officer) - you might remember his name -

Ward: H Y N E S -

LG: Right. He was a professional redbaiter, the expert on Reds -

Ward: He had the support of the Los Angeles Times of that day?

LG: Yes, the Chandlers, (Harry Chandler and family, owners of the Los Angeles Times). They had their Red squad and everything else, which later on other cities had, including San Francisco. So, a lot of the demonstrations were rousted around, sometimes just broken up. Nobody thought of going to court for an injunction against the cops or anything like that.

Ward: Well, it would hardly have paid to do it.

LG: That's right.

Ward: You'd have had a hell of a time getting a lawyer to do that for you.

LG: Yah, even though later on we found that there were all kinds of very fine lawyers in L.A., like Leo Gallagher and Al Wirin. I guess it was partly we didn't know them and partly we thought it was just a waste of time.

Ward: There were a lot of things that went on down there that I have heard about, including taking pretty young girls who had joined any one of the left-wing outfits and trying to get them to entice the sailors who were on the town to go to meetings and all that sort of thing. Do you have any familiarity with any of that sort of stuff?

LG: No, in fact, I think this is apocryphal. There were efforts made to get leftwing literature into the hands of the fleet or anybody else; no question about that. But this business of enticement and having special cadres, this was all stuff that came out of

LG: the professional redbaiters. Look, those guys had to make a living and keep their jobs at the Los Angeles Times; if they didn't invent a story, I think they would be off the payroll.

Ward: All right, so these things began to happen. Anything that you would like to discuss about your political or labor activities in your last year or so at UCLA?

LG: We decided we ought to make an attempt to organize. At that time the TUUL was around - Trade Union Unity League - which was leftwing dominated. Happily, it did make some progress in some of the textile plants in New Jersey. I think they made a contract at Patterson, New Jersey, where Big Bill Haywood (leader of the Wobblies) had helped to lead a strike, he and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (a famous female Wobbly who later became a leading Communist). The strike had been broken, so an attempt was made to set up this rival federation, which had sporadic success.

In San Francisco, even after I moved up here a few years later, they still had the Marine Workers Industrial Union around. I automatically joined it - even though I never went to sea. They never did get a contract as far as I know. They had some unbelievably dedicated, hard-working people with them - guys like Harry Jackson (a speaker and organizer for Communist causes).

Ward: His real name was Glickson.

LG: Right. At that time he was Harry Jackson; after the MWIU finally folded its tent, Harry Glickson got a job in Warehouse; he was a good, solid member of Local 6 until he was pensioned off. He died a few years ago.

Ward: The last time I saw him was in a natural place - a demonstration in front of the San Francisco City Hall about peace.

LG: And there were very few demonstrations that Harry Jackson would miss. But in L. A. we tried to do something with the TUUL.

Ward: What types of workers did you approach?

LG: Well, in 1931 the Hollywood unions had a strike and were pretty thoroughly dismantled. They never did really get back in their original shape for some years. I remember working down there with a chap named Wolfe, who was an old-time studio worker and a leftwinger.

We tried to form a motion picture workers' industrial union. There were a number of sign-ups, but never really enough to make a go of it. Remember, there was no such thing as a National Labor Relations Board. If a guy signed up and the boss found out about it, didn't like it, he would just kick his ass off the job.

My dad never dropped his union membership. He just remained a member of the Carpenters (Union) all the time - good days and bad days. Wolfe was a good egg and we worked together. I was just lending a hand, helping him to distribute leaflets and things of that sort.

I didn't have as much to lose as somebody permanently attached to the industry. In those days you did not ask a guy who was working full time in the studios to go out there and distribute leaflets. That's just another way of asking a guy, "Why don't you quit your job?"

I recall in 1931 distributing leaflets to the Max Factor workers, the cosmetics place; still has a big plant in Hollywood, now under contract with the ILWU.* Has been for some years.

I remember distributing leaflets. Most of us youngsters distributing leaflets were driven off and a few of us were picked up and spent the night in the clink. And I gave some other name and the next day, they kicked our ass out, and that's all.

Ward: No charges or anything?

LG: No, they didn't bother with charges, and it never occurred to you to go back in there and make a protest, either. What the hell good would it do? Obviously, Max Factor could get just about anything they wanted from the Hollywood police.

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*ILWU (International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union)

Ward: Well, those activities went on -

LG: Any number of unemployment demonstrations were going on, too, and I remember attending those. Many of those were downtown in front of City Hall or places like that; or out in Boyle Heights; some of them in that Olivera Street section, which later became the Mexican section.

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Ward: Okay, Louie, you were in the middle of - something happened downtown, I believe.

LG: These demonstrations, or most of them, were directed toward the economy, unemployment, jobs; most of them were broken up by the cops. During that time a number of us went down to San Diego to help out in an unemployment demonstration. One of the guys who came along was Will Geer (a movie actor). He's the guy who acted the part of Walton in the Waltons on TV.

Ward: There's a Geer who played the part of the sheriff in Salt of the Earth.

LG: That could be - Will Geer. There was a bit of a riot that followed the demonstration and the cops were breaking it up. Some of the guys tore apart a park bench. I remember seeing Will Geer with a piece of it in hand, swinging away at the cops. Whether he prefers to remember that or not right now, I don't know. He's one of the actors in Hollywood that had a rough time later on after the Dies Committee, the McCarthy Committee.

So there was a great deal of activity along this line. I remember the unemployment marches in those days, a number of them. One thing about unemployment in those days; it was the most democratic thing in the United States because everybody from every walk of life was in that same goddam line - college professors, engineers, secretaries, laborers, you name it.

Ward: Well, you got a degree in February of '31 from UCLA; in what?

LG: In economics.

Ward: Now, to something else - there were girls, I suppose, along the way; you made some experiments. You got married somewhere in there, didn't you?

LG: Right, I got married later in '31. When I graduated in February I decided not to apply to Berkeley until the fall semester; part of the time was spent in working a bit; a lot of YCL activity at the time.

Ward: What kind of work were you doing then? Studio again?

Matrimony

LG: Whenever I could catch a job - almost anything. It was getting rougher and rougher to find work. I got married during the summer to Dorothy Shenkman - Dodie. As a matter of fact, we went off to Yuma to get married. I was also trying to make a couple of bucks so as to go to Berkeley.

Ward: You went to Yuma and sometime later you went to Berkeley?

LG: Yes, but before that I worked on two things: one was - my father had bought a lot with the hope of building a house around 1929 or 1930. It was on Glen Green. Glen Green was a dead-end street that ran off of Beachwood Drive, a little further up toward Hollywoodland.

In 1931 the studio where he had been working all those years since 1924, Tec-Art, was having a very rough time. They finally went under. They owed my dad quite a bit of money, wages that had accumulated, and I recall a family session where he finally decided that his chances of getting the money were very slim, if any. If workers' liens on wages even existed in those days, nobody thought of it in those terms.

On the other hand, the guy who ran the studio, Hamilton - an interesting and pleasant guy - though the poor bastard committed suicide a couple of years

LG: later - went along with the idea of my dad getting his money out by ordering building materials. The studio credit was apparently still good. He figured that he sure as hell didn't want to beat my dad out of any money; if he was going to owe anybody, he would prefer to owe it to some big building supply outfit. After all, they were good customers of all these outfits because most of the sets were constructed from scratch.

My dad is one of those who finally began to resolve some of these problems of building the sets from scratch because he introduced a jack which could be used for storing flats; a flat being, say, the side of a building. He invented a jack; you fastened one to each end and you could lift the flat on a few wheels. The thing was stable with quite wide wheels and then you could shove it in a place and store it in one of these big studios, upright.

It was depression time, there was nothing to do except go ahead with the building, because the supplies were there. So my dad worked on the building, I worked on it, my brother, Sam, who is a couple of years younger than I am, he worked on the thing. My other brother, Saul, was too young. We finally put together a good solid four-apartment place with a very tiny apartment on the street level; the whole thing was on a bit of a rise.

Ward: What was the tiny apartment for? A manager?

LG: For any one of us - no manager; they never had a manager. They always lived there themselves. I don't think he used an architect. We worked on the house and I recall carpenters coming around trying to get a job for even a buck or two a day, which my dad wouldn't tolerate. He paid the union scale.

Ward: What was the scale then?

LG: Maybe the scale was five bucks; I'm not sure. Wage scales were much lower in '31. You didn't even have the minimum wage. There were no such things as fringes and Social Security deductions; they didn't exist.

LG: Whatever the union scale was, he paid. True, he didn't hire any more than he had to. If we had to sweat it out, we sweated it out. If you put in a 12-hour day, you put in a 12-hour day. Packing lumber there was quite a job, uphill to the second story and climbing over these rafters. I packed the lumber.

I also learned a lesson on work that I never forgot. We had to mix concrete. A lot of this stuff was mixed by hand - these troughs, you know, a certain amount of cement, a certain amount of sand, a certain amount of lime and then you'd put them together.

He hired a laborer to help on this. We built the forms for both the foundation and a retaining wall that went mostly around the building. Well, I thought I was in pretty good shape. I was young and full of piss and vinegar, and hell! I was going like a ball of fire; we were shovelling and this man worked at a slower pace than I, but very evenly paced. At the end of around four hours I was ready to drop.

Luckily, there was a luncheon break where I could nap for a while and get some food. Then I realized something; look, this man is going to keep going the whole day at the same pace and I'm just going to have to quit. From then on I watched him, just tried to work at his pace. He knew what he was doing.

Ward: All right, so it was along in there that you got married. Where did you live? Did you set up housekeeping some place or what?

LG: We set up housekeeping for a short while there. A bit later, after we finished on this, I took a job. Some guy came around and said, "There's only one way you can make a buck, if you want to go to Berkeley. I've gotten a franchise for selling publications. I know all kinds of areas around here that are untapped, including places in Pasadena, where people can afford these things."

I said, "Fine." The guy's name was Harry Gervitz - G E R V I T Z. Later on he became administrative secretary to one of the governors up in Sacramento,

LG: and then I think he was dean of either Santa Barbara or some part of the University of California.

Ward: Really! He sounded to me at first like a con man.

LG: Yes, but he wasn't; he worked himself. He provided the transportation and he got a couple of extra bucks for that. We really did quite well.

Ward: Did you have to put any money down to get this?

LG: No; I wouldn't have had any money, anyway. He supplied the gas and oil. He's the one who drove us to Yuma, too.

Ward: Then he was your best man, practically?

LG: Yeah, though I think it was one of those justices of the peace things. But we did fairly well. We hit a lot of live ones in Pasadena.

Ward: What kind of magazines were you selling?

LG: Popular magazines. Sometimes we'd sleep in these tiny motels if we were too far away from L.A. Sometimes I met Dodie very early in the morning - everything else was done on foot, you see.

Ward: On foot?

LG: Oh, yes, you walked. In other words, if you went to an area in Pasadena, you just spent your day walking.

Ward: Oh, but you didn't go from Pasadena to Westwood?

LG: Oh, no - no - that's when he'd pick you up. He would drop different people and then he would take his route. Then he'd pick you up at the end of the day. Another place that stands out in my mind, we went up to Santa Maria because that was a good distance from L. A., beyond Santa Barbara.

Ward: Well, anyway, what was Dodie doing all the time?

LG: She was doing some modeling and some other kind of work, trying to make a couple of bucks. Everybody

LG: was scratching. The reason this Santa Maria stuck in my head is that I ran into a whole group of Japanese farmers. I figured no use spending much time there; those were mostly market farmers, vegetable growers; produce.

I discovered, on the other hand, after sitting around with a couple of them that they would look through the publications. They would always ask about certain publications; then I realized that their main interest in buying them was not for themselves but for their kids.

Apparently, they had this real pressure on to make sure that the kids became Americanized, even though it was very probable they were sending their kids to Japanese language school. Anyway, I made enough dough there to make it to Cal and to get by there.

Ward: How long did this period for getting money to go to Berkeley last?

LG: About three months.

Ward: Well, anyhow, this represented the gap between February 1931 and the start of the fall semester.

LG: Plus there was another period in there of working on the house; there wasn't much idle time.

Life in Berkeley

Ward: So, then you came to Cal. Did Dodie come with you?

LG: Yes; as a matter of fact, we hitch-hiked up.

Ward: So, you came with the intention of doing graduate work in what?

LG: I wasn't too sure myself. I knew that the chance of getting any kind of a steady job in L. A. just wasn't in sight. It was the heart of the depression;

LG: by that time the full impact had been felt on the west coast. I liked the idea of going back to school. I played around with several ideas; one was law school, which I did for a year. That was something that my parents regarded with high favor.

Ward: Oh, the professional man?

LG: The professional man; I registered at Boalt (Boalt Hall, U.C. law school) and there was no problem getting in, but at the same time I decided I would do some graduate work in economics. I will concede that my attendance schedule at Boalt was not outstanding.

There were some profs there that I enjoyed a great deal, particularly old Max Radin, who had a great sense of humor, one of the erudite sort of men. And as a matter of fact, we became quite friendly - and Ballentine, (Henry Winthrop Ballentine) I liked him; he was another -

Ward: That was Betty Ballentine's (a San Francisco newspaper reporter) father?

LG: Yes, Betty Ballentine's father. Another prof I remember taking a course with, a person I really enjoyed was called Captain Kidd (Alexander Marsden Kidd) -

Ward: His last name was Kidd?

LG: That's right -

Ward: Know his first name?

LG: I haven't the slightest idea, and I don't think he he knew himself. Everybody called him Captain Kidd -

Ward: To his face?

LG: Oh, yeah - well, no, Professor Kidd; but outside his presence everybody talked about Captain Kidd. He was a short, gray-haired fellow. Later on he did some arbitration work for the ILWU, (International Longshoremens' and Warehousemen' Union).

Ward: Whereabouts did you live in Berkeley?

LG: We lived up on Euclid approximately three-quarters of a mile or a mile from campus.

Ward: Did you live up hill from the Rose Garden or below the Rose Garden?

LG: No, we were a little bit below the Rose Garden.

Ward: Apartment house?

LG: Yeah, one of these wooden apartment houses with these sort of cubby-hole flats. It might have been a home at one time that was then carved up into a lot of flats. There were several people around with whom we became quite friendly; one guy I remember in particular. I think his background was Mexican or Spanish and he'd think nothing of starting the morning with some operatic tunes, some of which we could have done without. He wasn't in the best voice but a good guy, good company.

There were a number of people up there who were transferees from L. A.; UCLA had no law school at the time. As a matter of fact, I believe, no graduate school; or if it did, it might have been in a couple of limited subjects.

Ward: Were you working at all while you were going to school?

LG: Not so much during the week. I had enough money to pay the rent; transportation to and from school was no cost item - you could walk there. Tuition was just about non-existent. You paid a little bit in law school but that was for certain books you had to use. All books were purchased second hand. I forget the name of the place which was the main shopping place for students for required reading; it was right near Sather Gate (main entrance to the campus at that time).

Ward: Oh, yes - well, that whole block from Sather Gate to Bancroft (Bancroft Way, one block south of Sather Gate) is gone now.

LG: That's right - it's part of the university. When I went there Sather Gate was just outside the university grounds. They had this old iron fence which was never closed -

Ward: They had a sign up and once a year they closed everything so the cars couldn't cross the campus, except where they wanted them to.

LG: Right - and they had those right of ways.

Ward: And Dodie, did she go to school, too?

LG: No; she did register for some classes, but I think a good part of the time she tried making a buck too, the same way a couple of other gals did, like Linc Fairley's (Lincoln Fairley, former research director, ILWU) wife - what was her name then?

Ward: Bert (Bertha Stone) -

LG: I can't think of it - Bert - she was one of the people, among the first we knew on campus. Dodie would pick up some money as an artist's model, which was hard work.

Ward: Well, Dodie was very pretty.

LG: Yes, Dodie was very pretty. A number of us got work on Saturdays. During the week it was pretty hard to tie in with working. The number of jobs around the campus were not all that many; a few people would work in the Golden Bear restaurant to get a meal. I doubt if they paid them any money because everybody lived on a shoe string. Money was practically non-existent.

Ward: What would you say it cost you and Dodie a month to live? You were getting by for less than $100 a month?

LG: Oh, yes; the figure that was just going through my mind was somewhere between $40 and $50.

Ward: Really? How much did you pay for rent?

LG: Twenty, maybe eighteen; rents were cheap. The Berkeley campus was small then. I don't think that the entire school, graduate and undergraduate, exceeded 5,000 students.

Ward: North Hall was there -

LG: Boalt Hall was four stories - you would walk up, no elevator. The Economics department was in an old wooden shack, right next to the Campanile - whether that's still there I don't know. They had a Student Union, but it was a very small building, not too far from the Faculty Club.

Ward: The Faculty Building was right across the way.

LG: Right - you crossed a small bridge, that was the Faculty Building; students didn't go there unless invited by a faculty member. It was a small campus.

I remember scouring around to find some work there and I never hit anything. Finally, a number of us got together. I'm trying to remember the guys involved, whether Aubrey was there. Joe Segal, I remember his name, a few others, at the Farmers' Market on lower Washington Street -

Ward: On Sixth Street in Oakland?

LG: Right - Oakland. I think it's all been torn down, but there was a Farmers' Market where farmers could bring in produce on a Saturday. They would come in around three or four in the morning with their produce and set up their stands. I think they paid a nominal fee.

For those people who couldn't afford the regular grocery stores, this was the place to do your shopping. The farmers were a good bunch, in the main, and they needed workers for that day. I suppose many of them preferred students because there was no problem that the students might say, "Look, I need some more work." It was a one day job - we'd come in and goodbye.

LG: We worked things out so that each of us would get a job in a different section of the Farmers Market; somebody would work in vegetables - certain kinds of vegetables. Some in fruits -

Ward: Did you wrestle the boxes?

LG: Wrestle the boxes, take them down, put them on the counter. Nothing like a fancy grocery display; you sold the stuff very quickly on Saturdays. At the end of the day, if there was a lot of produce left over, they said, "Help yourself."

If there was fruit left over that they thought might keep, they would take it. In many cases they would say, "Okay, you can have this box of oranges." Tomatoes were a good example; they knew perfectly well that tomatoes wouldn't be worth a damn in another week. You didn't have refrigeration. Same thing would be true for things like eggs, butter and milk, poultry -

Ward: You mean, you'd get that in addition to a little pay?

LG: Yeah; I think we got four bucks for the day's work; we worked hard and fast. The farmer felt you were giving him an honest count. It never occurred to anybody to take the farmer's money - although once in a while, I'll admit, if the wife of one of our friends came by, she got extra measure if she bought something.

We'd then gather at somebody's house close to the campus, taking our loot back with us - the stuff the farmers gave us. We'd divide the stuff up so that everybody had his groceries for the week. So, I wouldn't say we were in penury.

Sure, sometimes there were certain meals you had to make do with. Aubrey insisted he was a good cook, which is a lot of bunk. But we never could tell him to his face because -

Ward: Then he wouldn't cook?

LG: That's right; at least once a week, Aubrey would make one of his famous omelettes. I didn't realize until years later, what he was trying to do was to make a Joe's Special (an omelette in a famous San Francisco restaurant).

He would use hamburger, one of the things that you could invariably get - rarely saw steaks; you did see chickens - onions, spinach and everything else he could chop up, chuck it all in there and stir the thing up, until finally you had this famous omelette. That would make a full meal, just like a Joe's Special does. He loved ketchup and tomato juice; there was more tomato juice in that stuff than anything else and then on top of that, the ketchup.

Ward: And no red wine to help it down?

LG: No, though later on in Berkeley - maybe it was the first year - some guy joined the crowd. He was a non-political character, just a friendly guy -

Ward: Most of you were a bit political?

LG: Oh yes, pretty much believed in the same things. Among the girls you had people like Dodie, Liz Salz - Andy Salz' (Andrew Salz, who became an attorney in Honolulu) sister; she's dead, died of cancer many years ago and Edith Arnstein Jenkins (a prominent Bay Region liberal). They were all highly political. You put that together and you're not so badly off. The only major transportation cost you paid was the street car fare to get all the way downtown -

Ward: Or to get to the city?

LG: Yes, you'd walk down to Shattuck (Berkeley's main street) or wherever it was. I think there were street cars running in those days, and you could go all the way down to Sixth Street and there you were at the Farmers' Market.

About red wine; somewhere along the line this chap joined our group, that was some time in '31. He'd worked around as a laborer - he was older than we were, about 25 - 26. He had a car, which was

LG: a big deal too. Once a month or so we'd go on an outing with him; we'd take that old road over to Walnut Creek, the Fish Ranch Road. It was a winding, winding road; barely enough room for two cars.

At Walnut Creek there were a lot of Italian farmers; there we used to pick up a gallon of wine for 25 cents; we'd get three or four gallons of wine and then you'd be having red wine with your dinner.

Prohibition was still in effect, but the farmers were friendly enough about that. They knew him. So you had your red wine as well as a good diet; at least it was a fairly balanced one. We had loads of vegetables - plenty of fruit. That was no problem at all.

The big thing that would happen once every couple of months was to make a trip over to San Francisco; that was quite an outing.

Ward: What was the attraction, particularly?

LG: San Francisco, itself, which we were very fond of - the ferry ride. We'd land at the old Ferry Building because all the ferries came in there.

Ward: Did you go to any shows there?

LG: No; whatever shows we went to were around campus; whatever music we'd go to listen to was around campus; shows in San Francisco were out of sight -

Ward: Too much money?

LG: Yes. The place we'd hang out most was Izzy Gomez'; we'd walk there from the Ferry Building. It wasn't all that much of a walk.

Ward: Walking right through the old produce market?

LG: Right, it was a busy place but only late at night. If we walked through there at around six-thirty or seven o'clock in the evening, it was deserted.

Ward: Walking back at midnight was something else.

LG: Beginning midnight, the trucks would come in. If you stayed some place there and started walking back around four or five in the morning to catch the first ferry back, then it was the most amazing jumble of traffic and everything else in that produce market. Oh, there must have been about 400 - 500 guys used to work there.

And we'd go to Izzy Gomez'. He was very good company. I liked him, and a lot of newspapermen hung out there; just listening to them was fun, meeting a few of them here and there.

Ward: Ever hear him called the Duke of Africa?

LG: Oh, yeah, he always wore that big, black hat.

Ward: You never saw him with it off, did you?

LG: If you did see him with it off, you'd understand why he wore it all the time. I understand he was as bald as an eagle; but Izzy was good. He'd ask us first, "How are you fixed?" I usually figured that I had to make that whole outing on somewhere between four and four and a half dollars, plus your ferry fare.

Ward: Oh, you could do a lot on that.

LG: Yeah; I told him "Okay, we've got four bucks." "That's enough." You'd sit down, he'd bring you some grappa. We'd get a couple of shots of that. If you could drink that, you could drink anything. Let me tell you, it was a deliberate plan to see if anybody's stomach could stand up.

So, you'd get a couple of shots of grappa, a glass of red wine, and he'd make you a steak. He didn't do the cooking at all. He was behind the bar and he had this pal of his who was also a Portuguese, a thinner guy who never wore a hat and did all the cooking. There were just the two of them working the whole restaurant.

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Ward: Okay, Lou, you were saying and talking about Izzy Gomez and the food and drink there; saw dust on the floor, old tables. One other question: what caused you to finally drop off the law course at the end of the year?

LG: I decided that the law wasn't really my bag. One of the things that bothered me was that the law had very little to do with justice.

Ward: All right - let's call it off.

LG: It would take quite a while to get into that.

(Interview 4: 7 March, 1978)

Law and Justice

Ward: All right, Lou, do you want to expand a little bit on the relation of law to justice?

LG: I want to make it clear that there are all kinds of really wonderful lawyers who have taken up difficult and important cases; surely no denigration of people like Clarence Darrow; but those were the rare ones.

The impression I began to get and which is still true today - a good lawyer who gets you off if you're guilty; that becomes a definition. There is no attempt to evaluate a lawyer in terms of securing justice. The general evaluation is, if you're in big, serious trouble, go to Mel Belli or one of these lawyers.

Ward: F. Lee Bailey, uh?

LG: F. Lee Bailey is as good an example as any.

Ward: Okay, so you left the law school, but you didn't leave Cal.

LG: No, I finished the year at law school, admittedly not attending an awful lot of sessions. I remember taking the exams at the end of the year.

By pure coincidence, a couple of years ago I was asked to attend a retirement luncheon for a man who had been on the Workmen's Compensation Board for I don't know how many years, an attorney.

This man who was retiring had asked that a mutual friend get me down to this luncheon. When I got there I realized that the fellow who was retiring was the one who had called me just before the exams; it was the commonly accepted method of swallowing a lot of knowledge within a week or so and then regurgitating it and promptly forgetting the whole

LG: thing the day afterwards.

This chap had called me; he had no one to cram with and wanted to know whether we'd work together in preparation for the exams. I saw no reason why not, so we both took them and we both passed. However, while I was at law school I began to meet a good many people in the Economics department; people like Bob Brady (Professor Robert Brady), who wrote a very authoritative job on fascism - The Spirit and Structure of Fascism, I think it was called; an excellent guy. I'm not sure whether he was a Marxist, though much of the time he sounded that way.

There was a Professor (Norman S.) Buchanan, highly competent and very open for discussion. A lot of classes there were seminars. Gulick (Charles Gulick) was another prof there - Flugel (Felix Flugel) was another one. There was a Madame (Jessica) Pexiotto; that, by the way, is a sephardic name.

Ward: A woman?

LG: A woman, and she was in the Economics department; a delightful older woman, who enjoyed having some of the students over to her house for tea and endless discussions.

I was doing a good deal of reading at the time, not just in the material required by the seminars and the courses but also in the whole field of Marxist thinking - everything from Engels' Fueuerbach to A Critique of Proudhon. That was an excellent piece of work by Marx, practically positive, filled with humor. That's something you never caught trying to read Das Kapital.

This was definitely a forensic sort of thing; the debates were endless in that whole Marxist period. So, there was a good deal of personal attention and a great deal of rapport between the students who were really interested and the professors -

Ward: They got to see a professor and talk to him?

LG: No question - yes. If you felt that you were tackling a subject regardless of the degree of controversy or differences, you were more than welcome. The outlook on seminars was that they were completely different from undergraduate students - lecturing.

The professors in many cases would measure their success by the degree to which they could induce a lot of discussion; whether it was mild or sharp made no difference to them. But as long as there was an exchange of ideas, it came closest to the definition of a university, the market place of ideas. I spent more time there than at Boalt Hall.

In the following year I dropped out of Boalt; again, partially the business of trying to figure out how in the devil to make a living.

Ward: I was wondering -

LG: Yes; that was constantly under discussion. Bear in mind - 1931-1933, we're speaking about now. The depression had really taken hold; people were scratching, but badly, before any of the pickup took place with some of the New Deal programs, whether it be WPA, CCC (Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps), or what have you.

Ward: None of those things had yet come into operation?

LG: No, because I finished in May or June of 1933. (President Franklin D.) Roosevelt had gone into office in March.

Ward: You finished what?

LG: I finished as much as I was going to do at Cal. I was playing around both with the idea of "What do I do once I get out," and "Is there something to take at the university that might give me a handle?" At the same time I gave some thought - which I eventually dropped - to going on for a Ph.D. in economics.

Ward: Did you get a Masters?

LG: I don't believe so. I decided to pick up a secondary credential. Perhaps I could then get work as a teacher; it was something that appealed to me.

Ward: The thought of being a teacher?

LG: Yes. I spent a portion of that year doing what they called "practice teaching," down at University High.

Ward: That would be in Oakland - Broadway near 50th?

LG: That sounds about right - the Oakland side.

Ward: What were you teaching there?

LG: Poli sci, current events, some economics. The courses in education given at the university were absolutely the most deadly things under the sun.

Ward: In education?

LG: It was so much drivel. The so-called techniques of education didn't include things which today you could say have some justification.

You just went through a whole group of textbooks that meant absolutely nothing. I could never figure out how a so-called School of Education warranted its existence. But you attended the courses once in a while; you took the examinations. I don't think it meant that much to the professors either. (interruption)

Ward: You were talking when we were interrupted about the dry-balled nature of the education courses.

LG: Yes. During that time I was still taking some of the economics courses, as well as being active in all kinds of other things.

Ward: Yes, well, what kinds of other things?

LG: Primarily in the left-wing movement.

Ward: Were you active in the YCL?

LG: In part. A lot of our activity was spent around a group called the "Social Problems Club," which sometimes was not referred to very kindly by the

LG: other students, who agreed we were social problems. There was a good deal of that activity.

A Fling At Teaching

Then again, doing practice teaching ate up a fair amount of time. You were assigned to certain classes under the guidance of a regular teacher at the school. The best I could do that year was to pick up a secondary credential, take some additional economic courses, and continue my activities with the rest of the progressive group on campus.

Ward: Was there any pay for this practice teaching?

LG: No, none.

Ward: What were you using for money those days?

LG: I had a few dollars that I had made during the summer time. I went south during the summer. I went out again with this same character on these magazine sales. I picked up some work around the studios, at Tec-Art. So, I had enough to get by, and Dodie worked.

Ward: Mostly as an artist's model? Did she do any other kind of work?

LG: She might have, but I don't recall; we had enough to get by. Getting back and forth to L. A. was pretty commonly done by hitch-hiking, although I do recall on one trip from L. A. - I don't think Dodie went along then - I decided to go by ship. I took one of the old Admiral Line ships and they had some very low fare, around $6.

Ward: Sit up all night?

LG: No, they had some cots in what looked like steerage below deck; just a big, open space and oh, a lot of the crew hung around there. So, I took the ship; it was a trip by itself. I can understand how the Admiral Line finally went out of business. These

LG: were old tubs, rolling like the devil, and the food left an awful lot to be desired.

While doing the practice teaching there were a couple of amusing things that happened. I was assigned to a group of seniors in high school, a number of whom were a bit on the difficult side.

Ward: Any racial or ethnic distinction?

LG: Not particularly. This was a group of youngsters who just wanted to finish and get out. They were not that fond of school. After a couple of sessions with the class - unfortunately I had not spoken with the head teacher - some of these youngsters were creating much more difficulty than it was worth. I was not much older than they were.

I finally turned to them and said, "Look, there are some of you here who obviously just don't feel like sticking around for the course. If you feel that strongly about it, just go ahead and leave. I'm not going to report you as playing hookey or anything. Take off and let those who want to do some studying stick around." None of them did leave.

Ward: None of them left?

LG: No, they quieted down. The other thing was that in the course of some of these current events, I got my hands on a group of posters that had been put out by the Soviet Union. They were promoting different things like sanitation, public health.

I saw nothing wrong with just giving them examples of how a government that thought differently would go about tackling the general issue of public education. In those days the illiteracy rate in Russia must have been pretty heavy and a lot of these things were being told by pictures.

This went quite well, and the supervising teacher didn't look particularly askance, but I recall going to one of these sessions and the whole back row was taken up by the administrators, the principal,

LG: some guys from the Board of Education; everything but students. I suppose that they had a bit of the jumps and jitters about the whole thing, but this did not affect the attitude of the supervising teacher.

Quite to the contrary, she was most encouraging. I asked her, "Look, if I'm way off base on this thing, tell me." She said, "No, I hope you stick with it and go on teaching." So I got through in fine shape; I got a fairly good recommendation from the supervising teacher.

Ward: Did these school officials say anything to you?

LG: Not a word. All of us get a bit gun-shy in these things. They might have come because they were just curious and interested.

Ward: They must have talked among themselves about it.

LG: I'm sure they did. It didn't come out as a subscribed course in any of the future curriculums, though.

Ward: Well, all right, so you got through that. You weren't working for a living, then.

LG: A group of us still had this job down at the old Farmers' Market on Saturdays; Dodie did some work in some of the restaurants around there - the Golden Bear, or one of those.

Ward: You were still living up in North Berkeley?

LG: Still the same place.

Ward: So, you were just about at the end of your studies at Cal?

LG: Yes, I went back to L. A., not enthusiastically. I had gotten quite fond of the bay area; but I thought I might at least have some chance of getting some work down there. I really didn't know of anything I could move into in the bay area. I went back to L. A., but things there were just as bad or worse.

Ward: What did you finally land down there? There was no relief down there - no CCC -

LG: No, there was relief; where you got it in the form of goods, in kind; you could pick up canned goods, rice and a few other things, staples.

Ward: What agency would distribute that sort of thing?

LG: Well, I'll be damned - I don't know. I don't recall the agency. I remember putting in some time on a WPA project, leaning on a shovel. I finally got off of that too; I had no use for it. I must have stayed in Los Angeles about a year. I made periodic trips up here, for some friends I wanted to visit; for some YCL meetings. I recall specifically coming up here for International Youth Day, May 30, 1934.

The Great 1934 Strike

Ward: That was just when the waterfront was beginning to -?

LG: The waterfront was on strike. The strike on the waterfront started May 9, I think. Some of us were trying to help out as best we could.

Ward: How could you help out?

LG: Oh, people to be seen around Hollywood. There were a number of progressives; the object was to raise a couple of bucks to give them a hand.

Ward: I see - you prepared lists or helped to prepare lists?

LG: I didn't have the lists so much as some others did.

Ward: You went around with the lists in your hands soliciting money for the strikers?

LG: I remember visiting Erskine Caldwell who's quite a good writer; he was fairly generous. The word we had from people around Pedro (San Pedro) was that some of the guys were in difficulties and perhaps it wasn't too wise for them to stick around; so we had to raise a couple of bucks and give them a hand in that respect. May 30th, as I said, a number of us came up because it was International Youth Day.

Ward: Do you remember where you met?

LG: No, but we had a demonstration on Market Street - lower Market Street near the Embarcadero. The turnout was not very impressive, 200 or 300. The longshoremen did not participate in the demonstration. I heard later that the reaction of the men was "Well, if the kids want to try demonstrating, that's their business." We were broken up by the cops.

Ward: Well, what were you demonstrating for?

LG: In support of the longshore strike -

Ward: Did you go to 121?

LG: Yes, 121 Haight Street (California headquarters of the Communist Party), right. I went there a number of times before and afterwards, but that was not the locale of the demonstration. We may have had our meetings there.

One reason I recollect this breaking up of the demonstration was that when these cops came at us on their horses, swinging their clubs, there wasn't much you could do except get out of their way in a hurry.

I remember ducking in a doorway just as a cop was swinging his club and the guy he whacked on the head was Pete Macchiarini, who later became a jeweler, a very successful one; still has a place in North Beach. When Terry went in there to get something, he still remembered me, though I hadn't seen him for years.

LG: During that time I was sort of bouncing back and forth; a bit later in 1934, I poked around a bit to see if there was anything doing in the teaching field. As a matter of fact, I remember going as far as the Escondido mountains, between the coast and Imperial Valley, that area. They were shopping around for somebody to teach there, but nothing came of that, either. Things were sort of at a dead end for me in L. A.

Ward: You managed to still get along?

LG: Yes and no; things began to come apart.

Ward: Pretty rough situation; you were only 21 when you got married, weren't you? Dodie was about 19 - 20, wasn't she?

LG: About 20, yeah.

Ward: And then all this uncertainty?

LG: It was an impossible period. Lots of grief, no money; I think the marriage was a casualty of the depression and unemployment. You finally get to the point where you simply say "Hell, this thing isn't working - may as well take off and get a fresh start, somewhere, somehow."

A lot of things were done in those days out of sheer economic deprivation and frustration. So, when I moved back to northern California, I went to live with a man who is still around, named Kaplan; Irving Kaplan and his wife, Dorothy; they lived on Roosevelt Way in San Francisco. He was an economist for PG&E, (Pacific Gas & Electric Company) although a dedicated left-winger; and his wife, a very fine, warm person.

Ward: So, they befriended you -

LG: Yes, I had known them before that because they knew a good part of the circle of friends in Berkeley. For example, Al Van Tassel, an awfully nice guy - saw him about a month ago; and Bea; she married Van Tassel. They moved east later on; remained friends

LG: of Kappy until Dorothy died; Kappy still sees them.

I saw Al for the first time in 40 years; he came by; the same good guy, though he's had a rough time. He went through open heart surgery, too. It took quite a toll on him. I guess it does on everybody. We reminisced a good deal, particularly about the days when we were at Cal together.

Ward: You made a lot of good friends - friendships that have more or less persisted throughout all these years - at Cal, didn't you?

LG: Yes, including friends among some of the professors. Bob Brady continued as a friend. Unfortunately, he died in the 30's.

Ward: He had a wonderful wife, too.

LG: Yes. I remember his wife working with me on a political campaign later on when I was secretary of the (California) CIO. We had some big campaign going on - I believe it was Proposition 1. She worked with us on the publicity; she was quite good in that field.

Yes, I did make some good friends. Gulick, who's very, very old now - about a year or so ago I met him. He came over for dinner at the home of some people in Sausalito. I hadn't seen him all these years.

Ward: Nineties, I suppose? Eighties?

LG: Late eighties, yes. We had a very active group at Cal. We put out literature, distributed leaflets; various group meetings.

Ward: What were the issues this active group espoused? I suppose Spain?

LG: It was primarily the depression. It was a pro-Soviet group. One of the local issues was the University budget, around which we called some mass meetings at Sather Gate; that was the free speech corner. The old balustrade is still there; that was the speaker's platform.

Ward: You just hopped up on that curving rail?

LG: In those days it was outside the campus, so there was no place from which to kick you out. I recall several efforts to meet on campus - to get Wheeler Hall - not that we ever could have filled it - or one of the smaller halls, but those efforts were pretty much in vain.

One who really gave us a hand was Harry Kingman, the head of the "Y" (Young Men's Christian Association). By the way, he had been a professional baseball player at one time. I think he was on the Yankee farm system or he might have pitched for the Yankees before he took this job at Stiles Hall; that was the "Y". He was forthright, very generous, very friendly and when there was no place else we could meet, we could always meet there.

Ward: I can't help an editorial comment here. I never met Harry Kingman but I knew the "establishment" people in Berkeley; he had that peculiar faculty of getting along with both the right and the left.

LG: He had the facility to get along with human beings.

Ward: He was respected, even by the old curmudgeons.

LG: Right. And among other things, did you know that when Harry Kingman retired from Stiles Hall some years ago, he and his wife, Ruth, decided they would go back to Washington and lobby on their own for good legislation: a two-person lobby!

Somebody mentioned the fact that he was back, and when they were putting together that bit of a dinner for me last year (the farewell banquet for the retiring secretary-treasurer of the ILWU), I asked that they run down Harry Kingman and his wife; I wanted them there - and they were there.

Ward: I think you mentioned their name in your little talk.

LG: I insisted on introducing him because I consider him a real old friend. Well, Harry Kingman knew what we stood for. He sure as heck was no fool. A very

LG: bright man. In addition to running Stiles Hall he coached the University of California baseball team. He did that among his other jobs. And his attitude was -

Ward: He'd been in China, too -

LG: He'd been born in China - son of missionaries.

Ward: He was known as an old China hand.

LG: Right. He's still around and I have spoken to him a couple of times. Some time around 1950 they had a retirement dinner for him. Terry and I drove over there to be at this retirement dinner; or retirement luncheon, whatever it was.

So, we made a lot of good friends. I recall one of the high points of our Social Problems Club activities was trying to organize a movement against a proposed budget cut; one of the economies that was being proposed at that time by Governor Merriam: (Frank Merriam)

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LG: It was part of the so-called economies that were being gone through by various politicians in view of the depression. These were all unbelievable depression years.

Whether the budget cut was warranted or not, I don't know. We weren't that interested. All we knew was that a number of us were in school because at least you learned something, studied something, rather than standing around in a bread line or leaning on a shovel. At that point they didn't even have the shovels to lean on; the government had not acted as yet.

Ward: Wait a minute. You had been on WPA before.

LG: No - no. I'm doubling back here. I'm talking about the period 1931-33; I guess it was in 1933 that this budget cut was being proposed.

LG: We did a great deal of leafleting, propagandizing and talking before different groups to see if we could put together a march on Sacramento, the objective being to lobby the legislature, the governor, against the budget cut.

We never got the march under way. We couldn't mount enough of a group to make the thing go, although it drew a good bit of attention, particularly in the Daily Cal (the U.C. student newspaper); they couldn't very well knock it - "Don't pay any attention to these Reds, who are proposing a march on Sacramento to stop the budget cut" - when the first thing that would be cut would be the Daily Cal. On that score, we had fairly wide support.

I'll admit that there was very little done in the area of student government; a few of the kids - the left-wing ones - tried to run for ASUC (Associated Students of the University of California) offices. But most of us couldn't vote in the ASUC because we couldn't pay the dues - there was a $10 fee per semester or per year.

It actually wasn't that bad a buy, but ten bucks was still ten bucks. And all of us were pretty fiercely non-org - we'd call ourselves - The big fraternities and sororities, the big sports --

Ward: They did not interest you?

LG: No - no; we thought they were a snob group.

Ward: What about the star football players, you didn't follow around after them?

LG: Quite the contrary. One of the star football players - I think he was a fullback and people pointed him out around campus - must have taken an awful beating. He walked like a punch drunk fighter, sort of on his heels half the time. That didn't impress us a great deal. Oh, I'm sure they were college heroes to the org groups - to the fraternities and sororities, but they weren't to us.

Ward: The word "jock" hadn't reached the prominence it has now. You were anti-jock?

LG: Yes; plus we didn't know a great deal about it. The question of scholarships for athletes was not that well known. What was well known was that the sports were constantly being boosted and promoted by the alumni.

The word would leak around that some guy was on a football scholarship, whether or not he actually got paid money I don't know, but the impression most of us had was that they were taken care of one way or another by the wealthy alumni; things like summer jobs, part-time jobs.

A lot of them worked around frat houses - belonged to fraternities without having to pay the regular monthly charges. Many of us didn't see why somebody who was willing to be a football player should be getting economic help while the rest of us were scratching with the chickens.

The Communist Candidacy

LG: During that same period many of us felt that running for political office was considered worthwhile, if for no other reason to provide a forum as to some of the things we believed in, both in terms of the general economy and socialism.

I ran for office one year - just simply by submitting my name on the ballot. The Berkeley City Council - or something like that, in 1933.

Ward: Socialist program, I suppose, you ran on that?

LG: Communist or Socialist ticket, one or the other.

Ward: It must have been on the Communist ticket. Wasn't there a Socialist group on the campus too?*

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*(Editor's note: Goldblatt ran on a full slate of candidates, sponsored by the Communist party, for the Berkeley City Council, election of May 2, 1933; he received 649 votes.)

LG: Yes, as a matter of fact -

Ward: You were at odds with them, I suppose?

LG: We weren't particularly friendly. They called themselves the YPSLs (Young People's Socialist League). The group that was most outspoken of the Socialists on the campus was the League for Industrial Democracy. Oleta O'Connor, who later became Oleta O'Connor Yates, was the head of the LID, League for Industrial Democracy.

Ward: I thought she was a YPSL.

LG: She might have been a member of that at the same time. I remember some strenuous debates we used to have.

Ward: Did you debate Oleta at that time? She was on the women's team (University women's debating team), I believe.

LG: That's right. I was not on the debating team. I remember some debates among us; a lot of them were on the same theoretical plane that students have a tendency to get into.

Most of us felt that the record of the Socialists, and particularly of the Socialist democracies over in Europe was how these organizations had collapsed in World War I. After all, we were still on the heels of the post World War I period, where the Socialists became super-patriots and joined the war movement.

Many of them didn't speak out at all, or supported their governments, when they decided to launch the invasion of the newly formed Soviet Union when it was under attack; so we didn't feel too kindly towards them.

The other thing was that many of them spoke in the tradition of Norman Thomas. Their facts were good on the logic of socialism as against the anarchy and stupidities of capitalism. They had all the specific examples such as milk companies all delivering milk on the same street; namely, the stupid forms of waste and competition.

LG: They had the same figures we had on the degree of unemployment. They pretty well accepted the same economic thinking. I guess they considered themselves Marxists in terms of their economic evaluation of the system.

Where we parted company was in the general area of the class struggle, with the Socialists feeling very strongly that the only method of change was through the legislative process, whereas many of us felt that the legislative process became a bog which you just sunk into.

I recall one debate where Oleta O'Connor and myself disagreed pretty sharply on that. She was trying to say that something could be done about the class struggle. I said I didn't know what could be done about it except that it was there. It was something like the common cold. People would talk about it, but you couldn't get rid of it; it was just inevitable.

She still thought the legislative process was it and that emphasis on the class struggle was a mistake. Well, the world turns. Oleta O'Connor became one of the leaders of the Communist party as you know; married Al Yates, a very good guy.

Now the world is turning again and you have the development of Euro-communism which is in large part dependent on the legislative process under a new set of economic and political circumstances.

Ward: That gives a better picture of your extra-curricular activities during those years. Now here we are in Irving Kaplan's home, trying to find something to latch on to.

LG: That's right; that was in late 1934.

Ward: You were up here on May 30th in '34 and then you came back again -

LG: As a matter of fact, I came back again around August. It was after the general strike, which impressed and completely overwhelmed all of us. This gave complete substance to the power of the

LG: working class to change the system.

After the general strike and after the settlement, there was quite a period of vigilantism in San Francisco. You might be familiar with it.

Ward: I am very familiar with it.

LG: Oh, there was a breaking up of the various left-wing bookshops, rocks being heaved through them, 121 Haight being attacked. The red hysteria was pretty bad.

The longshoremen had gone back to work in July and the issues had gone to the arbitration board; Archbishop Hanna (Edward Joseph Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco) was on that; O. K. Cushing (a prominent San Francisco business man), and Edward F. McGrady from the United States Labor Department. The newspapers were just off their rockers and screaming, saying they were all communist plots.

Ward: That's when the Examiner put up iron shutters on its ground floor windows?

LG: Right. That was the reason why afterwards in all the Labor Day parades, the one thing you'd hear down the whole length of Market Street was when they walked past the Examiner building at Third and Market streets; that "boo" echoing through the hills of San Francisco.

This was a period of a good deal of terror. Some of my friends would be sitting with shotgun at night in a place like the big bookstore down at 37 Grove Street. I recall going down there and spending a few hours, keeping them company. What would have happened if the vigilantes . . . .

Ward: I was there and fell on my ass in a pool of blood in that store, right after the attack. I was in there and quick - rubber heels - and zip. Oh, yes I saw a lot of that!

LG: When was that attack?

Ward: That was during the general strike - I was over there as head of a seven-man team for the Oakland Tribune.

LG: Yeah. There's no question that guys like Sam Darcy and Walter Lambert (Communist party leaders) played a very influential role during all that time; gave advice and unstinting support. There's no question that it was the left-wing that really stuck with it and took on a lot of the very hard chores, worked endlessly; marvelously devoted people.

What was happening was this unbelievable wave of red-baiting, far worse than what happened with the Dies Committee (the House Un-American Activities Committee, headed by Congressman Martin Dies at that time) or the McCarthy (Senator Joseph McCarthy) era, because it was connected with personal violence against individuals, against bookstores, headquarters and so forth.

People did what you'd expect them to do in that situation. They'd sit guard in the bookstores or headquarters all night, hoping that they could frighten some of these people off.

Ward: You actually did a little duty down at the Grove Street bookstore?

LG: Yes, I was sent down there one night -

Ward: Did anyone have any weapons there?

LG: Oh, yeah, there were weapons there; luckily, no one had to use them. I'm not sure that I knew how, frankly (laughter). My ROTC training didn't go that far. All the training we got there was to march into battle in perfect formation and the enemy would fall over.

Ward: All right, so you were doing what you could and looking for work, I suppose. What kind of a job were you gunning for?

LG: I made no distinctions. You were in no position to be job shopping and choosing; there weren't that many offers.

Ward: Well, what did you get in the way of a job?

LG: When I finally got back to San Francisco?

Ward: Yes, when you were at the Kaplan's house.

LG: I had gotten a job for a little while before I left L.A. I got a job with the National Youth Administration - NYA - and I continued on that in San Francisco. I was some sort of a two-bit supervisor, because I had a college degree.

Ward: What kind of a project did you supervise?

LG: I'll be damned if I can remember; a lot of them were just things you'd put together. I recall being very active making surveys and studies of unemployed or job skills. If you advertised a job, you'd have more damn applicants than you could shake a stick at. They'd just line up by the thousands. People would sleep there all night.

So I was with that for a while. I didn't feel it was something that I wanted to stick around with. I started getting some other work; finally, in 1935, I went to work in a machine shop - Federal Mogul. That was a shop that made bearings for automobiles and other moving parts in San Francisco.

I got to know some of the guys there who remained friends for life - guys like Bob Cain and his brother-in-law who had been a light heavy weight champion of the navy. I only worked there about a month.

I got fired, perfectly good reason. My job was operating a punch press for the purpose of boring a hole through this babbit - sort of a lead shield. The hole had to be exact, and the one thing you had to be careful of was that the bit which you pressed through this punch press was always sharp so that the hole would be even; they also put a screw in there.

I was on the graveyard shift, and obviously I wasn't doing any sleeping during the day. I was too busy with other things, including making major changes in the world. I thought the work was going pretty easy, all these bearings set out on trays before an inspector looked at them.

LG: Come early morning when the superintendent turned up, went around and looked at these trays, I was half asleep; he looked at one of these trays and said, "Well, I've seen a lot of bearings in my life, but this is the first time I've seen so many bearings with perfectly square holes." I hadn't sharpened the bit.

Well," he said, "this is not the job for you." I couldn't argue about that, but I did have the chance later on, when I belonged to the ILWU, to get a bunch of our members to give a hand to the Machinists (members of the Machinists' Union) who were picketing Federal Mogul to get their first contract.

This was about 1936 or '37. My old friend, Bob Cain was still there. One of them had gotten fired; that was the fighter - some guys wouldn't join the union so he poured lye in their shoes.

Ward: Lye?

LG: Lye. Guys would put on their work shoes while working there and they'd leave their good shoes and he would pour lye in them. That would raise hell on somebody's feet, so Bob later came to work on the waterfront.

I got myself a job at Owens-Illinois Glass Company, which was then located between 15th and 16th on Folsom Street.

Ward: Well, you were getting jobs pretty good then. Was there any special reason? Did you have friends at these places? How did you manage?

LG: At Federal Mogul, I got a job just by going down and applying. The factory there had begun a small expansion . . .

Ward: Somebody tell you it would be a good idea to go down there?

LG: That's right. Then I went down to Owens-Illinois. Some people I knew said, "The turnover there is enormous because the job conditions stink and

LG: nobody likes to work there." I think half the Mission (a local working class district) kids had gone through Owens-Illinois Glass at one time or another.

Old Harry Harrington who runs the bar once worked at Owens-Illinois - he has a place now at Larkin or Turk. I went to work there some time around May, 1935; I worked fairly steadily. I was paid at that time a little over the base rate. The entry rate there was 40 cents an hour. I think I was paid 42½ cents.

Ward: Why?

LG: After I had been there a month the foreman took me aside and said, "You know, you're being paid more than the base rate because we think you ought to be executive material." Because I had some college background.

Once a month they would have these dinners - but you paid your own way - made up of foremen, a couple of superintendents from out of town, the big cheeses; and then people like myself would be invited to go. You were supposed to be part of the whole comradeship of the guys who really run the place.

Ward: They were trying to take you in?

LG: That's right. You weren't one of these ordinary peasants, but as far as the work was concerned, you just worked your ass off.

Ward: You were working days this time?

LG: No, I worked days part of the time. One of the unhappy things about the job was they rotated shifts. By that time I knew that night shifts were not for me because the amount of sleep I'd get during the day was negligible.

Later on I began to adjust my life. When I finished up work on the graveyard shift, I'd walk back; at that time Terry and I were living together -

Ward: Now, you were divorced by that time, were you?

LG: Yes. I'd left the Kaplans. I'd known Terry in L.A. She was married at the time when I first met her, though not living with her husband. He was back in Chicago.

Ward: She came from Chicago?

LG: That's right. She went back there and they decided they would call it a day; they separated and she came to San Francisco where I was.

Ward: But your first contacts really began in Los Angeles?

LG: Yes.

Ward: She was a social worker, wasn't she?

LG: Yes, she was in San Francisco.

Ward: Where did she get her education? Chicago?

LG: She had gone to the University of Chicago. I think she had gone to the University of Wisconsin and spent a year at Columbia.

Ward: What brought her out here?

LG: I think what brought her out here was that she was married to a doctor who was doing his internship at L. A. General.

But by that time, 1935, she had traveled north to join me. We had this apartment on Telegraph Hill, 290 Green Street; that was it. We must have stayed at the Green Street place for a couple of years.

They were all Italians living in the house: the landlord was concerned whether we felt comfortable because they were all Italians. I said, "Fine, if they want to get along with us, we're happy to get along with them." The rent there was not all that bad; I think it was $22.50 a month, and there was no heat. You had two kitchens - a regular kitchen and then the side kitchen for heavy cooking, so that the house wouldn't be filled with the odors.

LG: It was a modest place, and furnished even more modestly; we got things from Sears Roebuck and Company like this garden furniture that you can assemble yourself.

Ward: She was working and you were working?

LG: She was working. She got a job with SRA - State Relief Administration - which was a branch off of programs launched by the federal government.

I was working at Owens-Illinois Glass, and that was a workshop; I can understand why guys went through it. For example, let's say you were packing beer bottles or coke bottles, they were long Lehr - I think it's spelled L E H R - which takes the molten glass and puts it in a mold; a spurt of air goes into the thing, gets it into a form.

It comes out in this Lehr and takes a certain length of time to cool. The Lehr was calculated to move at a rate of speed so that by the time they got to you, you could pick them up and inspect them. Actually, it was a conveyer, but it was always called a Lehr.

My job as a warehouseman-packer was to inspect the bottles, because one of the concerns of an outfit like Owens-Illinois was lawsuits; you don't hear of them anymore. At one time, people would sue a company because they found a piece of glass in a bottle, a cigar butt or something.

You examined the bottle for two things, one to make sure there were no breaks around the throat of the bottle, that there were no chips, what they called "birds' nests" because sometimes small veins of glass would form a bird's nest within the bottle itself. They would break the moment you put fluid in there, and you would have glass in your drink. And we inspected the bottoms.

You picked up the technique so you could do six or eight at a time, inspecting one side, turning them over, catching them and then slipping them into the container, but that was tough work. Those

LG: bottles just kept coming at you - you felt a little bit like Charlie Chaplin in "Modern Times." The only way you could get a smoke if you wanted to - there was practically no relief . . .

Ward: You could not stop the machine?

LG: No - no. There's a reason why you cannot stop a glass machine. If that glass hardened in the machine, then they had to bring in jack-hammers to start it again. If a bottle is defective, you let it go down a chute, and it went right back into the crusher and came up again as molten glass.

Ward: But no smoke?

LG: The only way you could do it was to go like hell to work that Lehr back as far as it could reach; that would give you a margin of five to eight minutes, depending on the kind of stuff that was coming along. That was time enough to have a smoke.

Ward: And you could stand there and smoke?

LG: Yeah, they didn't care about that, as long as you could handle the work.

The ventilation system wasn't too good either. Right behind the place where the packers worked, like myself, were small open chutes right next to the floor. Sometimes you got goddam irritated with everything because of the speed of the Lehr; you felt that no matter how fast you worked, there was always somebody at the other end giving you an extra notch.

Although there were some things that were nice, easy going, like gallon jars; that was pleasant. You could only take one at a time and look the thing over, plus they couldn't come that fast.

Ward: And coke bottles?

LG: Coke bottles! My god, they came at you like waves, just one steady flow. Sometimes you would get so irritated you would take one of these bottles that hadn't passed inspection and instead of letting it

LG: go down the chute you just heaved it out of that small ventilator opening and out onto the street, which was not heavily trafficked.

Anyway, it was there that I joined the Warehouse Local, Local 38-44 of the ILA.* There was an organizer came out there, Jerry Dillon, an Irishman; he'd been around for some time. A guy, I would say, in his early fifties.

A number of us signed up in the union at once and he told us to watch our step around there. The company had a long record of firing someone just like that . . .

Ward: For joining the union?

LG: Or for any other reason. My hunch is that company policy was deliberately designed not to have anybody stay too long. It was the kind of a job that didn't take that long to learn. Yes, you had to have the dexterity to handle the stuff.

They used these small walk-around dollies, sort of a dolly-jack; you shove it under the flap and then if you want to release it, you step on the catch and it lowers it. That was the main piece of mechanized equipment they had. All the rest of the work was done by hand. You just muled it - worked with your hands.

So, I joined, and another fellow who worked with me on the packing line and in the warehouse, Freddie Helmar. Incidentally, he remained a member of the ILA, and then the ILWU, until he retired. I bumped into him at a party for the pensioners last Christmas. Looks great. He'd been an ex-fighter at one time. Hell of a nice guy.

Ward: A lot of those guys have been pugs.

LG: Oh, yeah. A lot of them had been fighters just to make an extra buck. That was one of the horrible things about the fight racket. I used to go to the National Arena (a prize-fight ring). They had Friday night fights, or Saturday night fights.

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*International Longshoremen's Association

LG: These kids would just bang the hell out of each other for three rounds - 25 bucks apiece. A lot of the kids would do that, partly because they thought they were tough, and partly because they could pick up an extra buck.

Helmar joined, and Joe Dillon, not Jerry Dillon; not related. Joe worked in the warehouse and packing room with us; he had been there a bit longer than we had, an extra five or six months. He knew his way around there, so that many of us felt that it was a real leg-up to get Joe in the union.

I was fired out of there before I got sworn into the local; I went to work at Sunset Warehouse for a while.

Ward: Why were you fired?

LG: They fired me for union activities; the guy who was my foreman felt I had betrayed him and the whole world because here I was, a promising guy, who had been invited to pay-your-own-way dinners where they gave you a lecture on the making of glass and the wonders of Owens-Illinois, and here I had gone ahead and joined the union.

Ward: And that was a hell of - just treachery.

LG: Complete treachery - betrayal of all the confidence they had placed in me, which of course was just plain bullshit.

Freddie Helmar also got fired. And when I saw Freddie he said, "By the way, Lou, you know neither one of us ever got fired. Don't you remember, we were both laid off; they said they would call us back when they needed us. They just never got around to calling us back " (laughter).

So, that was the end of my work experience at Owens-Illinois. I had been there about seven or eight months. I decided I wanted to stay with the local. I had been attending meetings as a permit man, just listening in. I had a temporary book, good until I had six months; then I would become eligible for full membership.

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Ward: All right, now you were just becoming - you had been to meetings of the Warehouse Local -

LG: Local 38-44 of the ILA.

Ward: You were just one of the new members?

LG: That's all and -

Ward: Were you able to get other jobs in the industry?

LG: Yes, although there were pleasant things. One was working the graveyard shift; there is always less supervision at night.

Anybody in the higher echelons is not going to be there all night, so you have the lower range of the supervisors, most of whom are pretty well bored; just waiting until they have been there long enough to move up and get off the night shift.

There are all kinds of guys who don't like people looking down their necks, and they prefer working nights. I never did get quite used to rotating shifts either every week or every two weeks.

Ward: What warehouse would this be?

LG: That was when I was still at Owens-Illinois. The difficulty of rotating shifts once a week is that you never get used to sleeping at a certain time; even once a month is better than once a week.

You finally have to try to get your whole clock changed where you'd have your breakfast in the same way as you'd have your dinner after a day shift. You'd spend a couple of hours reading or doing something or taking a walk, and then go to sleep as though it was night-time; wake up in the afternoon, have a couple of hours and then go to work again.

LG: The other thing about the graveyard shift was, I used to walk home from work through the flower district, somewhere around 8th Street, and then walk over to Telegraph Hill, where we lived at 290 Green -

Ward: Quite a walk.

LG: A fair distance, but not all that bad. I don't think it took me much more than about three quarters of an hour; walking through the flower district was always pleasant. It was just about the time when they were finishing up, moving the flowers into the various flower stores around town.

I'd get to know some of the guys who worked there and I'd stop and pick up some flowers and usually I'd get a whole bunch of gladiolas for a dime, or something like that. When something was left over and they knew it wouldn't keep, they would just throw that in.

Ward: And that didn't hurt any at home, either?

LG: No. Those were the only two advantages I could think of in regard to the night shift - everything else was a minus.

Ward: That's a good point - we'll stop right here.

(Interview 5: 14 March, 1978)

The Electrifying Speaker

Ward: Before we get into anything else, Lou, I want to tell you that the other night I was talking to Barney Young, whom you may remember -

LG: Sure.

Ward: And I was talking about student days in L.A.; he came to UCLA about two years later than you and people like Aubrey Grossman. Among his reminiscences was a remark about the first time he met you. You were making a speech somewhere on the

Ward: Eastside in '31 or '32 - he wasn't sure which year. He said you were the most electrifying speaker he had ever heard up to that time. Even then, he said, you were something to listen to. He was greatly impressed.

The Dangers of Fascism

LG: I think he was talking about the Eastside of L.A., right?

Ward: I think so. I don't know if he said it was in a hall, or a street corner. I asked him what your subject was and you were talking on the dangers of fascism.

LG: That could very well be true. Some of us felt that there were the beginnings of fascism, particularly in Germany. True, Hitler didn't come to power until 1933, but there were already manifestations of it.

I know that was the beginning of a period of a great deal of activity, both in terms of participation of the YCL, getting to know a lot of the youngsters who felt the same way, beginning to form my own ideas as to where I wanted to go in life, things that eventually became a good deal more definitive when I went to Cal.

Working in the field of economics, I had come to certain conclusions that to this day I have not changed. One was that there weren't going to be any fundamental changes in this world without a powerful working-class base.

Student movements could be good; to put them down, I think is a mistake. True, they have a very limited and built-in life span, namely, the length of time that someone is in school. Also, the issues that might attract them are not exactly the same as those you'd find among the working people.

But the one thing I did know was that a lot of these things were developing and coming to fruition. Perhaps that coincides with what Young was talking

LG: about. Is he still teaching down on the Peninsula (an area between San Francisco and San Jose)?

Ward: I think he just retired.

LG: He'd be at about the retirement age. Yes. He's a bright guy.

I think that all these things spring from the same base fundamentally; fascism was just the open, mailed-fist control of the economy by the capitalist system, using fascist methods to make sure there could be no form of effective opposition to fascist control; basically what amounted to the employers' control.

These things were pretty well confirmed in the whole lash-up that took place between Hitler and the large industrial employers throughout Germany.

Ward: Well, it gives an interesting sidelight from a person entirely removed from what we are doing at the moment. I could just see you on that curving balustrade at Sather Gate. I used to see the guys there when I was a campus reporter, but that was before your time - back in the middle twenties.

Now to get back, you and Terry were living up at 290 Green -

LG: That's right.

Ward: For the record, Terry - Theresa; what was her maiden name?

LG: Jaffe. It's an old Israeli name. I think the port of Jaifa, right alongside Tel Aviv, is fundamentally the same name.

Ward: I see. You got married some time, I suppose.

LG: Later.

Ward: Want to tell me when?

LG: Got married in 1939.

Ward: I suppose that was a big family affair?

LG: No, it wasn't really.

Ward: Okay. You were working nights and beginning to attend Warehouse Local meetings. Okay, what would be the next progression? Did you move from job to job, or did you work out a steady job or what?

LG: I stayed with the warehouse industry. I worked at Merchants Ice and Cold Storage. That was at the foot of Telegraph Hill.

As a matter of fact, the building is still there - it's one of these old brick buildings. The cold storage house was closed up about a year ago. Right now I guess the brick building is being converted to offices and interior decorating shops, like a lot of others have.

Ward: What did you do in the ice house?

LG: Unloading, primarily, of freight cars. A good part of it was things like apples and pears; these did not go to the freezer, they went to the cooler.

There were two different sections to the ice house: one where you keep things such as meats at below freezing temperature; and the coolers where things like apples and pears could be kept for a great many months; there the temperature was somewhere around 40-45 (degrees Fahrenheit). But it was cold.

Most of the crew there were Italians, very cooperative and willing to teach somebody the ropes. I was taller than some of them. Some were short and stocky, better built and acclimated to that cold than I was.

Most of the stuff was hand piled; you moved it with hand trucks and then stacked it up by hand. You had a palette board and a jack that lifts the palette board 3 or 4 inches off the ground. Then you pull that jack with the board on it, or you used a hand truck. And you'd have to high-pile these boxes; they weighed around 50 pounds apiece.

Ward: That could get pretty old by the end of 8 hours.

LG: Yes. But you pick up the rhythm of the work. I'd say that the only part that I found particularly uncomfortable was the cold.

Ward: Did you wear long underwear?

LG: No. I recall one night I was working on a sort of overlap shift, starting somewhere around four in the afternoon or thereabout - used to be called a swing shift - during the period when you would have a great influx of pears, apples, from that Sebastopol (a town in Northern California) country.

I guess it was about 11 o'clock at night; we were unloading freight cars, and I see two guys walking down the platform - Gene Paton and Ralph Dawson. They had become friends of mine; we were part of the whole Local 6 mavericks.

Ward: It wasn't Local 6 then?

LG: No - no, it was still Local 38-44 of the ILA - and here they were coming down the platform, carrying a blanket for me and a bottle of liquor. They had apparently been out together after a meeting, done some drinking, and decided that Lou must be awfully cold, you know, after working in this icehouse all evening. So, they were coming down to warm me up. We all wound up at some bar having a drink.

Ward: So, you didn't stay at the icehouse forever. Why did you leave?

LG: Probably the work ran out. I then went to work for another icehouse, a big place - not too far from Islais Creek. It was down around that part where Third Street almost joins the Embarcadero, makes that twist there, and towards the off-shore end. It was a warehouse from which they either could load ships or take the - whatever cargo they had assembled and move that by elevator right down to the vessels; the whole idea at that time being that they would have a cold storage or semi-cold storage house directly adjoining the waterfront.

There was a whole series of these warehouses, all of which were tied to the water side one way or another. Merchants Ice, where I worked, was on

LG: the waterfront at the time; Gibraltar Warehouse was tied to the waterfront, Seawall Warehouse, Pioneer Warehouse, Hazlett Warehouse, this State Ice and Cold Storage plant where I worked. It was across the road from that huge building that later housed Phillips and Van Orden, the printing house.

Rathjen Brothers Liquor, Haas Brothers Grocery, S&W Grocery - those are places I remember; a whole warehouse complex adjoining the waterfront.

On the other side you had the banana docks where the banana boats would come in. I went to work in this cold storage plant, although at that time we weren't handling much perishable cargo. There was a tremendous overflow of cotton.

Ward: Why did cotton have to be . . . .?

LG: It didn't. I think they decided that they'd just simply use it as storage. No, cotton doesn't require cold storage at all. I was working with Frenchy Arripe. He was one of the early members of 38-44, good, solid left-winger - While I was moving from job to job, big changes in Local 38-44 were taking place. Some of the changes had taken place before I was sworn in as a full member.

Ward: When did you become a full member?

LG: In December, 1935. The president had been replaced. He was a weigher on those scales where the trucks had to come out. I gathered he was a fairly good union guy, but just didn't see the thing other than picking up a few of the warehouses, weighers and strappers and samplers.

The consignee never took the word of the consigner as to what the weight was. So all this had to go on the scales. It was a simple process but hard work, where the coffee sacks were piled on hand trucks and run across the scale; somebody was taking the weight. It was the kind of a market where nobody trusted anybody; they also took samples of this coffee as it was coming in to make sure it was the brand they had ordered.

Ward: But you didn't strap a sack, did you?

LG: No, you didn't strap a sack. On the other hand, a shipment of dried apricots came in wooden boxes; they didn't weigh an awful lot, perhaps up to 25 pounds. If they were going for shipment, they were strapped, so that you wouldn't have breaking in or pilferage. These went through strapping machines for overseas shipments. They had heavy orders from Scandanavian countries, Germany, France, the Netherlands. They were great holiday delicacies, ordered months in advance. It was the kind of stuff that kept.

Those were the weighers, and strappers and samplers; the weigher and strapper groups are still around the waterfront, though not like the large group it used to be.

The president was replaced by a man named Warren Denton, a pretty good egg. He was no youngster; he generally believed in what some of us were pushing for, namely, that the time was ripe to go for an all-out organizing drive throughout the industry, including moving away from the waterfront. That's where the name "March Inland" was coined. A number of us felt very keenly that there was a limit on how far we could go on the waterfront in terms of wages and conditions -

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III THE MARCH INLAND

The Warehouse Organizing Drive

Ward: Lou, you started to mention the "March Inland".

LG: Right. The other change that had taken place in Local 38-44 was a major change. Had it not been successful, I doubt very much that the whole organizing drive that later took place would have carried such momentum and resulted in the organization, not only of the vast majority of warehouses in this city, but of many, many other groups.

That change was the recall of Dan Flanagan. Dan was secretary-treasurer of the local. There had been some difficulties in Local 38-44, partially because of the presence of guys like Gene Paton, Ralph Dawson, George Valter, who had joined Local 38-44 from Western Sugar. And there had been some struggles going on up in Crockett.

The whole thing revolved around the basic issue that here were a lot of young rebels who wanted to move. Flanagan saw no reason why the local should expand. Quite to the contrary, his thinking was in terms of the entrenched Teamster (Union) thinking of the time.

If anything, he felt the local belonged in the Teamsters; or if there's going to be some organizing in some of these up-town warehouses, like (Ward) Walkup and places of that sort, those people belonged in the Teamsters' Union. He was very close to them.

LG: A very nice guy had been assigned from Local 38-79, the Longshore local of the ILA, Ernie Woods, to help our local. One of the turning points was, there must have been a difference of opinion between Flanagan and Ernie Woods. Flanagan, who had been light heavyweight champ of the Olympic Club or something, a considerably younger guy than Ernie Woods, worked Ernie over pretty good; he dumped him.

You had an unwritten code around the warehouse and the waterfront. There always was a good deal of fighting; that was not unusual. It was understood that a big guy, for example, kicking a little guy around was an absolute "No". A young guy kicking the hell out of an older guy was an absolute "No". If the guys were sort of evenly matched, whether one guy had fought more than the other guy was another story.

The violation of this sort of basic code was a pretty serious thing, and it was one of the things that finally triggered the removal of Dan Flanagan. There was a recall and he was ousted.

Ward: This was done by a vote of the membership?

LG: Right - by a vote of the membership. By the time I became a full member, things were pretty turbulent in Local 38-44 and -

Ward: How many members would you say they had?

LG: Oh, maybe four or five hundred.

Ward: Not very big.

LG: Oh, no. The headquarters were at 85 Clay Street. That was just up the street from where the longshoremen had their headquarters. It was on the second story - a long flight of stairs, straight up. I guess many an evening you weren't sure who was going to be in charge of the meeting because it depended on who remained at the top of the stairs. There were a lot of guys from the Mission, particularly, who were very good with their hands.

LG: This whole process of turmoil included the determination to organize on the part of the Young Turks, like Gene Paton, Ralph Dawson, Frenchy Arripe, George Valter, Bob Robertson. In the East Bay it was led by members like Paul Heide, his brother Ray Heide, Chili (Charles) Duarte, Bob Moore.

Ward: This was all one local, even then?

LG: Yep, one local -

Ward: Even Crockett (a town and sugar processing plant on the northeast shore of San Francisco Bay) was in it?

LG: Crockett was in it, yes. They (the workers in the sugar warehouse) were first organized in 1935, very new.

The group that was in favor of moving uptown, marching inland, finally won out. They were left inclined, union-oriented in their thinking. Simultaneously with trying to make a living, I was part of this group and the general program of driving inland.

Ward: Did you caucus before meetings to decide what positions you were going to take?

LG: On occasion, although once the main battle was over - did we or didn't we move uptown - there wasn't all that much to caucus about. Caucusing was not half as important as being there.

Ward: I guess there were some pretty close votes?

LG: No, not once the basic issue was decided; before that there were. You had this entirely different orientation, with many of us feeling very strongly that the chance of growing as part of the Teamsters' Union was zero, because the teamsters were dominated by guys like (John P.) McLaughlin, Mike Casey, John O'Connell; their thinking was entirely different.

As a matter of fact, Mike Casey's philosophy was that he would negotiate the wages for the teamsters, and after that, by god, it was the teamster's job

LG: to hang on and put out a day's work. The rumbles around there were that in 1933 the teamsters had reached an agreement with the drayage companies - after all, all of our warehousemen were directly affected by the actions taken by Local 85 of the Teamsters; they were all dependent on trucks, although most of the warehouses had railroad sidings so that there wasn't the complete dependence on trucks to the degree it is today.

The story was around that in 1933 the teamsters picked up a 50 cents a day increase in pay. After all, 1933 was still the depression and pretty rough times -

Ward: Fifty cents a day was quite a thing?

LG: Right, but simultaneously most of the warehousemen took a cut. How much truth there was to this I don't know, but there was no question that as far as the teamsters were concerned, they were interested in that driver. As to what happened to the warehouseman, that was just too bad.

Ward: So, anybody who had any brains didn't look to the teamsters?

LG: You couldn't see that as the way out; the teamsters themselves had no orientation in that direction. That didn't happen until later on with Dave Beck, (one-time president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters), who began to move. As far as Mike Casey was concerned, the only thing that was peculiar was that the teamster was driving a truck instead of a team of horses.

It was only in later years that these other things took place, where the teamsters began to move over into a much more industrially organized outfit, such as canneries and things of that sort.

Ward: So, you got Warren Denton in. What was the next step upward?

LG: I'm trying to remember who became secretary-treasurer at the time; (Charles)Quirey - Q U I R E Y - I think it was spelled. He was an older man; he went along with the general program of organizing.

LG: His attitude as secretary-treasurer was that he was a desk man; and the organizing was primarily with the young rebels.

Ward: Now, these offices in the union, like the secretary and the president and so forth, were they full time in a local that size?

LG: I don't think the president was - the secretary-treasurer was.

They were opening up registration for additional longshoremen, somewhere around 1936 - and a number of us kicked the thing around. I had become fairly good friends with George Valter and we were talking about whether we would go down and apply; we pretty well decided that we'd be better off, in terms of what we wanted to get done, to stay with warehouse.

Ward: You were hitting the floor pretty frequently in meetings then, weren't you?

LG: Mmm - It was the same time in 1936 that I went to work in a car gang.

Ward: Car gang - that's unloading railroad cars on the waterfront?

LG: Right. You didn't have much loading; it was primarily unloading awaiting shipment. I worked in that car gang for the balance of 1936 until the warehouse strike took place; after the strike, I also worked in that car gang.

Ward: But you were organizing on your own time?

LG: On my own time and helping out as best I could.

Ward: This was late '36?

LG: I'd say May, June or thereabouts. I was working in the car gang because the strike in warehouse in 1936 was the first major strike they had. That took place simultaneously with the waterfront strike which started either the first of October or the end of October ,?1936.

LG: All during this 1936 period, the local was growing by leaps and bounds. For a while we directed our attention towards cleaning up the organization of grocery warehouses. The waterfront warehouses were fairly well organized, although staggering around in terms of getting any decent contracts out of the employers. Our big ambition was to get 75 cents an hour which would have been $6 a day. During the strike that was the major demand.

Ward: What were you getting before the strike?

LG: Oh, around 62½ cents an hour - it varied a good deal. We decided we wanted to go for a uniform rate of pay, six bucks a day. We had some workers who were getting slightly more, like the East Bay Terminal workers, though most of them were in the lower range. The longshoremen had won their 1934 strike and in the arbitration award they had picked up a base rate of 95 cents an hour. When I worked in the car gang, one of the reasons that the car work was assigned to the warehousemen, through an understanding between the warehousemen and the longshoremen, was because they paid a dime an hour less than longshore work - it was 85 cents an hour.

Ward: That was a desirable job then, in warehouse.

LG: Yes, except for its sporadic nature. I happened to get an employer - Marr was his name - who was a small employer. I think he had around four or five regular guys in the car gang.

I was a half-assed lead man, because I drove the little pick-up truck from dock to dock. We had our hand trucks on this pick-up and you had to find the plates that would go between the dock and the railroad cars. Sometimes we carried a few of them along, sometimes we had to borrow them, but the total equipment he required to run this operation was not a great deal. The net result was that a crew of guys could roll around in a small pick-up truck of that sort.

Ward: From place to place?

LG: From dock to dock. The times you'd get four or five days work at one dock with a string of freight cars was not too often. It was quite common to handle a couple of cars in the morning and then go to another dock for a couple of cars in the afternoon. Marr's job was to get these bookings of discharge from the freight cars. Some of the guys on the gang got to be close friends of mine; a guy by the name of Tim Dorsey. He was a Harponian from out in the Mission -

Ward: A what?

LG: An Irishman from out in the Mission: Harps - a good guy. He was a member of the party. To give you an idea how crazy things were in those days, Tim had a tendency to drink once in a while, but most times he'd make the job in the morning. If he did, you found out pretty quickly it was better not to talk to him for at least three or four hours. He'd work the stuff out of his system - strong man - he'd just sweat, pure alcohol, and you left him alone.

He had been picked up one night as a drunk and taken over to the county jail. Apparently one of the cops there knew his family and when they went through his pockets, they found a rosary and a Communist party book. The reaction of this Irish cop was, "That's just like these Communists - they'll plant one of these books on anybody; here's a good Irish kid and he would never belong to something like this." Out he went. No bail; they just held him overnight and he was discharged the next morning.

And there was a character by the name of Riley in the gang, a reformed alcoholic. Riley had taken the pledge. He was an older man, though our idea of what was an older man was very peculiar. We figured if someone was 45 - 50 years old, he was ancient, or damn near. Riley was constantly lecturing Tim and I was trying to tell Riley, "Gee, leave the guy alone when he's hung over; at least he's here and helps put out."

The gang worked together; none of this stuff was very complicated; you picked up certain techniques

LG: I recall we got a string of cotton bales. These were all freight cars from the valley, and the bales were all standing up. Bales are heavy - they weigh about five hundred pounds.

Ward: What do you mean "standing up"?

LG: They're on end - standing up. On top of the ones that were standing up were a group of bales that were on their flat side. Well, wrestling with those would be quite a job. I figured out a system where the work was sure as hell easier on us. What it did to that freight car, I'm not sure.

Breaking out the door is opening the door and taking out the first bales. After you broke out the door, I figured the best thing to do was to roll those bales over to where you'd broken out the door and let them drop on one end. They'd bounce and hit that wooden floor of the freight car a couple of awful whacks, but then they would be standing up.

Once they were standing up, they were very easy to handle. All you needed was a hand truck and a hook to move that bale. It was quite a simple thing. Three or four guys would unload a freight car of that sort with ease in about forty minutes, sometimes less, because you weren't manhandling those bales and standing each one up. You just dropped them instead. The net result to Southern Pacific (railroad company) is something I've never tried to calculate.

Ward: You mean it tended to punch out the flooring of the cars?

LG: Oh, sure, the floor took an awful beating with 500 pounds dropping on it. And the drop - you had only broken out enough so that the bale couldn't fall down again. It bounced back and forth, maybe, once or twice. You just stood clear and made sure it didn't land on your foot.

In the case of these wooden boxes that were going overseas, dried fruit, there the technique was to simply break out the door and then by using

LG: a cargo hook which could get into the wood quite easily, you would pull out a whole string - enough for a handtruck full - and then tip those up. One man would help load the handtruck, the other guy would wheel it. So that moved along quite easily. Again, you weren't handling it box by box. If you handled it box by box, it would be a long process.

Ward: And now you say when you weren't on the job, you were frequently out organizing. When did you do that?

LG: At night.

Ward: Well, what would you do? Go to the night operations of these warehouses or would you go visit the homes?

LG: No - no, these were mainly meetings that might take place in a bar or restaurant over coffee, if you were just getting started in a house. If on the other hand we felt we had been picking up enough momentum, there might be a meeting at a union hall. The idea was that like in any organizing campaign, people take a lot of courage from groups; it becomes much more infectious.

It was quite common, let's say, if we could get two or three guys who felt that the place was ready, we'd say: "Look, why don't you gather ten guys and meet at a certain corner and then you walk down to the hall as a group?" Then we'd take another ten somewhere else. In that way there would be a general feeling that the thing was a real mass movement. A group of guys were hot to trot. Then meeting with them at, say, 5:30 - 6:00 o'clock before dinner was not uncommon.

Ward: Would they come to the hall, then?

LG: You'd have both. You'd have guys who were interested and you'd meet near their place of work - have a cup of coffee. Other cases, where you were further advanced, you'd meet them at the hall.

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Ward: Okay. There were two fulltime organizers?

LG: The fulltime organizers were Gene Paton on the San Francisco side of the bay and Paul Heide on the east side of the bay. Ralph Dawson joined Paton in the whole organizing program, after a while.

The organizers initially were paid so much a head. The initiation fee was $10. The organizers were paid five bucks a head. We had already picked up an additional two or three thousand members before we went out on strike in 1936. Our meetings were getting bigger and bigger and we couldn't hold them at 85 Clay Street, which would hold, maybe, two hundred men. That was still the hiring hall, though.

We began to meet at the Labor Temple out at 16th and Capp Streets. Well, at that meeting there was a move on foot to make these organizers regular, full-time organizers . . . .

Ward: And take them off piece work?

LG: Here was a whole group of impassioned speakers on the whole evil of piece work and how the labor movement had always fought against that; this was a horrible thing to do. Here we were guilty of having our organizers work on piece work; it ought to be abolished and they should be given the dignity of regular pay. Gene Paton sat the thing out and Paul Heide and Ralph Dawson were the others directly involved.

The membership voted overwhelmingly, if not unanimously, to knock off that piece work at once and to put them on a regular salary of $30 a week, which was our demand for the basic wage at that time. It worked out so that, although they had several thousand dollars coming, they never saw it. They took it as real champs; to them getting the job done was far more important than the money.

Ward: As long as they could eat and get by?

LG: Right; it was a step in the right direction. I still remember, because of the job that was done by a number of guys on the issue of piece work. These were fellows who knew all about the Bedeaux

LG: system. As a matter of fact, I met the old fellow years later. He said it was always misunderstood.

Ward: He invented, promoted this system?

LG: Yes, he promoted the system at a number of places. As a matter of fact, they had the Bedeaux system - or the piece-work system - at Owens-Illinois Glass when I worked there.

Some sort of complicated system, I'm sure that nobody could figure out except the guy making out the paycheck. If you got a certain amount of "ware" - that's what they called the bottles and everything else they made; it's a packaging term - out that was undamaged, then there would be certain incentive bonuses paid.

These ranged from the guys who were responsible for the molds where the molten glass was first dropped in, to the packers; certain incentive bonuses would be paid. This became an issue later on when we managed to organize Owens-Illinois Glass. I guess I was partly responsible for a running feud that went on with them for years.

When we finally got a majority there in 1937, we notified Owens-Illinois Glass we had a majority and if they doubted it, a picket line would be up the next morning. We weren't going to bother with any elections or anything of the sort. We secured recognition.

At the same time the company paid the fare of two officials from the Glass Bottle Blowers Association, an old-time AFL outfit, and flew them up from L.A. They herded the balance of the plant into the Glass Bottle Blowers; we had the warehouse and they were fearful we would pick up the whole thing. We managed to get a first contract.

Those were the days of annual contracts; one-year contracts. We thought that was enough.

From then on, I made it my own business that when that contract expired, we'd figure out something new and different we were going to ask. One

LG: time we put forward the demand, around 1938 or '39, that we refused to work on any kind of piece-work. I knew full well that this meant dislocating the base structure of the whole plant. How could you abolish piece-work in one department and not throw out the entire plant?

Ward: And this was at Owens-Illinois, again?

LG: Yes. The contract was finally resolved with the most insane kind of formula which in effect said that regardless how much work the warehousemen did, they would be guaranteed a certain amount as piece-work. It was really a base rate, not piece-work, but it had to be phrased that way because the company was fearful of a move by the entire plant to get rid of piece-work. I think by now it must all be gone. In those days it was an element in the production system.

Ward: Now, you've been talking about the '36 strike quite a bit. You worked in a car gang before and after that strike, didn't you?

LG: Yes -

Ward: And the issue of the strike was $6 a day - that was the main issue?

LG: I'm not positive. We struck the general public warehouses and the cold storage plants, which we had organized but were having more and more difficulty in getting contracts renewed. And we struck the grocery houses which we had fairly well organized.

During that same period Bob Robertson became very active. He had been working in and helped organize a grocery warehouse called Kockos Brothers. Chili had been working at a grocery warehouse called Haas Brothers; we struck the grocery houses at the same time.

Organizing was going on in other industries as well. I'm talking now about various parts of warehousing; you have public warehouses, cold storage warehouses, grocery warehouses, paper warehouses, which are quite big installations.

LG: You had dry goods warehouses, like the big Butler Brothers plant. They're out of business now, but they had a big warehouse at First and Mission (Streets).

I was head of the publicity committee, and eventually took over the chairmanship of the strike committee. But let me just mention one brief yarn about the nature of these organizing campaigns. We had organized the guys at Zellerbach, (Paper Company) including a lot of men who had worked there most of their lives, wore these 25-year pins.

Ward: And they were for the union?

LG: They joined the union - right. What happened was that the warehouses had been given an awful beating, wage-wise, during that whole depression era. We were coming out of it; we were riding this crest of organization; and they joined with us.

Anyway, one of the demands was the 40-hour week. While we had a Fair Labor Standards Act, it did not provide for the 40-hour week. You could work 44 hours a week without overtime; we were trying to pick up the 40-hour week with Saturday and Sunday off. We had a number of sessions with the company.

One of the Zellerbachs, Harold, I believe, decided he would personally take a hand in these negotiations; on most things we got along fairly well. When it got to the question of the 40-hour week, that was an absolute "No", with a long line of chatter about how they had to stay open on Saturday to serve the trade. We kept pointing out that we weren't talking about closing one outfit on Saturday and letting others operate on Saturday. We had the industry pretty well organized and we intended to make the same demand on all of them.

Well, we still got nowhere. Finally, I invited Harold Zellerbach: "Why don't you come down and talk to your own people?" And he said, "Fine, I'll do that." I said, "Don't worry, you'll be courteously received." We had a meeting at 85 Clay Street and we asked the men with the 25-year pins

LG: to sit in the front rows; we also urged that they be very polite, which they were.

Zellerbach made quite an impassioned speech which, in effect, said that the company realized that time marches on and the day had come when they had to recognize the union. Sure we were deadlocked on the question of the 40-hour week, but he kept using the expression, "Time marches on, time marches on", figuring that the people who worked for him would realize that they were not dealing with a completely hostile employer.

After he finished his pitch - I happened to be chairing the meeting - I said, "Are there any questions?" Although they had given him a polite hand when he got finished, one guy gets up and says, "Mr. Zellerbach - and they addressed him as Mister - in your talk you kept telling us that time marches on". He said, "Yes." "Well, just let me ask you one question; does it have to be straight time?" (laughter) Well, that ended the meeting.

Ward: No answer?

LG: No answer. I'll go into the details of the 1936 strike.

Ward: Very good. One other question. Sometime along in here, you must have been having quite a few dealings with the longshore guys?

LG: Yes.

Ward: And you had run into Harry Bridges by then?

LG: Right. In fact, we belonged to the Maritime Federation as well as to the Labor Council. At the meetings of the Maritime Federation, naturally, we saw Bridges. Of course, during that '36 strike we worked very closely with the longshoremen.

Ward: You had meetings with Bridges, personally, you and other warehousemen during the strike, I imagine?

LG: During the strike, yes. Prior to that, we had had encouragement from the longshoremen. They were anxious to see the warehouses organized, too.

LG: For obvious reasons, because in 1934 that had been one of the focal points by the employers in their attempts to open up the waterfront. They could use the warehouses to assemble cargo. They were right across from the docks; the fact that they were not organized and not prepared to move in direct support was one of the weaknesses that could occur during the strike.

Ward: Did you and your warehouse bunch - the progressives - accept leadership from Bridges and his bunch of longshoremen?

LG: It wasn't a question of accepting leadership, so much. In the warehouse organizing drive, there just was general agreement that it was a hell of a good thing.

Ward: And you exchanged ideas?

LG: Oh, yes. The place where we exchanged ideas primarily was in connection with developments in the Labor Council. Local 38-44 was a member of the Labor Council just as Local 38-79 of the longshoremen. Bridges was a delegate to the Labor Council; I became a delegate to the Labor Council. Our delegation to the Labor Council was made up in good part of this younger group I'm talking about, heading the organizational push. Remind me to tell you a bit of a story about Tim Dorsey some time, and this guy, Riley who was in the same car gang with me.

Ward: Okay, we'll start off with that next time.

(Interview 6: 21 March, 1978)

Ward: All right, what was the story about Riley and Tim?

LG: Tim had a tendency to do a little bit of drinking, but he'd turn up on the job and for the first three or four hours he would just sweat it out and worked like the devil. Riley was just waiting for the right opportunity to start lecturing Tim on the evils of drink.

LG: Tim gets on the job one morning and the usual thing and working his tail off, and about 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock, before Riley can say anything, Tim says, "I'm going to tell you guys something that happened last night." Tim had some funny scratches on his face. He said, "You know, I was having a few drinks south of Market at the bars where I go and I get to one place where there's a guy playing the banjo and he's playing "Way Down South" and "Mississippi" and "Way Down South in Texas."

"I just asked this guy, 'Why the devil don't you play 'Way Down South in San Francisco' or something? Why all these other places? I guess maybe I made a bit of a nuisance of myself because all of a sudden he takes that banjo and hits me over the head with it. Here I've got these strings on my face and these funny scratches; I thought about it later. Here I was going out for a bit of a good time, having a little fun and what do I do? I put some poor bastard out of business." At that point Riley gave up and decided there was no point in talking to Tim. He had a different attitude on life.

The 1936 Strike

Ward: All right, now we're back in the '36 strike?

LG: The strike lasted something over 60 days. It must have been settled somewhere around the first of the year. Incidentally, the strike did not cover all the houses we had organized, because a number of them were just in the process of being organized; places like some of the drug houses; paper. These were not quite set to make the move.

When we entered the strike we might have had about two, three thousand members, and we just about doubled the membership before that strike was over. It was a combination of an effective strike, an enormous amount of momentum, the use of a lot of the membership in helping to spread the organization; a real organizing crusade all

LG: through the city and the bay area. Part of the inland march had taken in the organization of the workers up at Crockett.

Ward: Did you have, aside from employer opposition, any other opposition from within the union or among the workers of an organized character?

LG: Not at that time. You did in Crockett, from a company union and a group led by company vigilantes. That was a very rough beef up there.

Ward: Was the ACTU active then?

LG: No. The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, you're thinking of; that was later on. We had a certain amount of opposition from the Labor Temple and from the established machine. John O'Connell was secretary of the Labor Council in San Francisco.

Well, the council had been trying for years to set up a sort of self-appointed mediatory body; a procedure whereby after demands had not been met in negotiations, the council would then ask the employers and the union involved to come before a council board in an attempt to see if the differences could be reconciled.

In some cases I think it was worthwhile. However, we had decided in 38-44 that movements of this sort were not going to do us a great deal of good. The council was not trying deliberately to do any harm, but we felt very strongly that the momentum was such that if you allowed it to bog down in hearings and further hearings and postpone the hearing, particularly with an employer who is looking for time to see whether he can whittle away at the organization, we were better off to just go ahead and move.

It apparently began to nettle people like O'Connell quite a bit. What we would do was report at the Labor Ccuncil that we had struck so-and-so and so-and-so; the strikes were on. And O'Connell invariably would make the point that once again the procedure of the council was not being followed; they had not called on us, and so

LG: forth and so on. We'd make some excuse for it that there just was no choice. If we had gotten bogged down in some sort of dilatory process, a lot of the steam would have dissipated itself.

Ward: Let me ask this. You were employed full time at the beginning of the strike and I believe you said you went back to that full time employment in private industry after the strike?

LG: Yes, after the strike.

Ward: Were you on the negotiating team that settled the strike?

LG: Yes, the negotiating team included the chairmen at that time. I was the chairman of the publicity committee for a while and then of the strike committee, both; so we were part of the negotiations, as well as the officers and some of the organizers.

Ward: How did you get to be chairman of this and that?

LG: Elected in meetings; part of it was just the business of "thems that were willing to work, there's plenty to do." It wasn't a business of having a lot of competition for the job; those who were willing and anxious to put in the time, to put in the nights and get the job done.

On the publicity committee, I can recall, we used to do a lot of drumming up for that, because in most cases it needed volunteers. One chap who did volunteer turned out to be a very good cartoonist. And he began to help in putting together some of our mimeographed bulletins. Most of the stuff we put out was mimeographed.

Ward: A mimeograph machine was a great thing in those days.

LG: Right. Making a mimeograph machine operate and knowing how to operate it. It was not unusual where the publicity committee would write its bulletin, do its own typing - we didn't have stenos . We'd crank the mimeograph machine and the same committee would be out there the next morning distributing the literature.

Ward: From beginning to end - the whole thing?

LG: Not uncommon.

Ward: You were on the negotiating committee also?

LG: Yes.

Ward: Was this your first experience dealing with employers?

LG: Just about. I might have had a little bit of experience prior to that talking to individual employers; in those days we were taking the various industries within rounds; several years later, the framework of what is called the master contract developed. The most highly organized group among the employers were the public warehouses, partially because they already had a structure in dealing with the PUC*on the setting of public warehouse rates.

Ward: What does that phrase, "public warehouses" mean?

LG: Public in that sense meant that it was not a proprietary warehouse. Public warehouses are where the warehouse facilities are available for rent. In other words, you had a line of merchandise and you didn't want to hire your own warehousemen, you could negotiate with a public warehouse both as to the storage of this material and filling orders as they were phoned in.

Ward: Very good. So this was your first strike of any consequence. Did you feel you had a lot to learn?

LG: I thought it was the job of any young rebel in the labor movement to learn all I could about the nature of the industries we were dealing with. We weren't terribly interested in the personnel on the other side. Employers are employers. It's not that we thought every one of them was evil and impossible; they were just employers.

We had a lot of discussion on the nature and structure of the industry. This, of course, was important on several scores. Let me give you one

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*Public Utilities Commission

LG: example which was quite crucial in the case of the 1936 strike. In the course of the strike, I had spent a fair amount of time with a man who ran a produce company. I believe this outfit was Paramount Export.

This man's name was AntoneMarguleas and we were just casual acquaintances and bumped into each other on the street, talked for a while. He came to me during the strike and said, "You know, a lot of us as merchants have an enormous amount of money tied up in things used for Thanksgiving - cranberries, turkeys, yams, the whole she-bang. If we can't get the stuff out, we're going to take an awful beating."

Well, sitting around with our guys, I threw out the theory, "Which kind of a strike is most effective against a public warehouse or a cold storage house? Is it most effective if you keep everything locked up and nobody can get anything out, or would it be more effective to actually empty out the place so that the house you are cn strike against had no source of revenue - nothing stored, so nothing to collect on? Which way do we come out ahead?"

Of course, the initial reaction to that was anathema, because you don't strike a place and let the merchandise out. .I said, "Well, we ought to give that some more thought. Maybe we can do something to help turn things around for us. Some of the merchants - they're not big guys - what if they paid what we're asking for in the event we take this stuff and release it; the stuff that's required for Thanksgiving? We have a chance to rotate that work through the union, and we insist that they issue a statement supporting our demands. After all, they're the ones who have to pay the freight to the public warehouses."

Well, that cast a slightly different light on the matter. After a good deal of discussion, we decided there would be no harm done to set up a release committee - one that these employers could visit and tell why they needed certain stuff and were prepared to meet our demands, and also to subscribe to the statement.

LG: We finally had a meeting with, oh, there must have been about twenty of these produce dealers and other employers who used public warehouses and cold storage space; they agreed to what we were proposing. It took a bit of heavy duty discussing with our own guys - yet it did work effectively. In the course of doing this, I'd say it was the first time that an employer group came along and said, "The union is right."

It was a big challenge to learn something about an industry. Where is the economic leverage? Where is the pressure? What is the nature of the beast? This became apparent in the case of the grocery houses, even though our demands were for the same rate of pay in all of them. There was the grocery warehouse that was a completely captive warehouse, which handled merchandise, produce and so on for their own stores; Safeway is as good an example as any. Mutual Warehouse; United Grocers; Lucky.

Then there was another number of grocery warehouses which were on the general market, selling wherever they could. Some of them carried specialty items, a variety of what was considered high grade items. For example, S&W (Sussman and Wormser) was a grocery warehouse, but it was not a captive warehouse at all. It was on the general market; S&W carried a very good reputation for quality brand of merchandise. Haas Brothers was another grocery warehouse which did not have a series of stores of its own. There was really a distinction between the two.

Some warehouses were called institutional warehouses. Those are the kind of warehouses which would cater to places like hospitals, hotels, public institutions, ships. The economics in these situations were not identical. It's much easier to break through with a captive warehouse than with an institutional warehouse.

The reason is quite obvious. The warehousing operation with an outfit like Safeway is an infinitesmal amount of their total cost of operation. It might mean something like a tenth of

LG: a cent on an item, whereas in an institutional house all these things would directly relate to the single economic unit they were running; they didn't have anything to merge it with. In other words, it wasn't part of a whole structure like the Safeway warehouse.

Ward: It wasn't under the same management, opportunity to streamline operations?

LG: Right. That was one element in the picture. The other element - an odd one in some ways; an institutional warehouse could not take a strike in the same way as an outfit like Safeway because in no case were they anything like the financial size or strength of some of the other warehouses, so that it was a combination of these things.

In some cases we'd even have some of these warehouses sign up separately provided they met the union demands. We managed to get a single rate from each industrial grouping. That's an example of what happens in grocery warehouses. Again, that's completely different from an outfit like a paper warehouse, where none of them ran storage. They had no specific outlet; their major sales in the paper warehouses were the usual, print shops - so -

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Ward: Now, Lou, you were saying something about a different can of worms.

LG: I was referring to different types of warehouses. All this is in answer to your question as to whether I felt there were a lot of things I had to learn. The answer to that is "yes." In other words, it's a bit more complicated than just saying, "Fellows, let's join a union and we'll bang these employers on the head and get this and that." Also, you learned that the employers had a lot of power and they could be very rough.

Ward: Can you illustrate that?

LG: For example, Wesley Howell. He was the head of Hazlett Warehouse: also the head of the Public Warehouse Association. He was as rough as a cob. He made that very plain right in negotiations. If he had had the resources he would have sat the thing out indefinitely. He just had no use for people coming around, organizing his loyal employees; it was evident that he could hold that machine together.

I think he might have been hurt more - though I never really found out - by the tactics we adopted in emptying out some of these warehouses and striking an empty place. That probably disturbed him more than anything else because as long as the stuff was stored it was collecting money. He might not be making the kind of income which goes with a regular turnover, but at least he wasn't being hurt as badly. So, you have to respect them for their own stubborness, I guess.

Ward: Did you ever run across an employer whom you found you liked, personally? He responded, in a way?

LG: There were a few employers, some from the smaller warehouses, who were not difficult to deal with. For example, a man I always liked was Adrian Falk. Later on he became quite prominent in the Chamber of Commerce. Adrian Falk was in charge of the S&W warehouse; an interesting duck. I think he came from an old-time San Francisco family, probably among the initial groups who came out here. I never felt that he was fundamentally hostile to the union.

I don't think he ever took the attitude that his only purpose in life was to see that we were gotten rid of. I discovered in talks with him that if you could put together something logical you had one listener. The big bulk of employers, it made no difference what you said, they just weren't interested. The only time they finally sat down and dealt was when they had to.

Later on even someone like Wes Howell - this was after the 1936 strike - mellowed quite a bit and was much easier to get along with.

LG: I recall a man from Zellerbach - I believe (Eugene) Breyman was his name - in 1937 - he was not the most difficult person in the world to deal with. Although he got himself all cranked up with some of these books on labor relations; all the devices which people invent in books that get you to be an expert on labor relations. The most unusual character I met during those years in some ways was "Navy" Bill Ingram.

Ward: Oh, yes - the football coach. How in the world was he in the labor relations picture?

LG: Not too hard. "Navy" Bill became one of the officers in charge of labor relations for Safeway stores. About the second or third time I met him, we happened to be walking down Montgomery Street together and he started telling me that he wanted to clear something up - that he was not responsible for running strike-breakers in 1934.

One of the things that developed in the 1934 longshore strike was where they recruited strike-breakers from the U.C. football team. He kept insisting to me that he had nothing to do with that; it was something that happened through various fraternities. How true I don't know.

We were walking along Montgomery Street, and he said, "Look, I got to sit down and rest." And we sat on the curbstone while we were talking. "Navy" Bill was pretty well known on Montgomery Street and here were guys coming along and saying "hello"; he had a heart condition.

Ward: You and he were sitting on the curb - ?

LG: Talking and we got along fairly well; except at a later stage, he came to me with a proposal that had to be turned down cold. His proposal was that they would meet whatever demands we had, plus an additional 5 cents an hour, if the union would then undertake to compel all other grocery employers to pay the same rate. Obviously, a device carefully thought out by the people who ran Safeway that this was one way to get rid of their competition. I had to tell him, absolutely no dice; we just weren't interested.

LG: In that same period I got to know Bart Crum; he was an attorney in John Francis Neylan's office. I recall going by there for a meeting with Crum and Neylan somehow getting around to telling me about the time he defended Anita Whitney (a famous Communist) against criminal syndicalism charges.

Ward: I didn't know that.

LG: That's right, he did. Here I am sitting in the office of this man whose reputation as far as labor was concerned . . .

Ward: He was the principal attorney for (William Randolph Hearst, famous newspaper publisher) Hearst.

LG: Oh, his reputation was that of one of the most reactionary characters in the town, and there he was telling me this yarn about Anita Whitney and defending her on criminal syndicalism charges, sometime in the twenties.

Ward: Nineteen - nineteen -- 1920, about the time of the Palmer Raids.

LG: And that was when I got to know Bartley Crum. For a while Safeway dealt separately; they were not opposed completely to working with the union. Later on they got to be more and more difficult, particularly when life got complicated with the entry of the Teamsters into the field of warehouse organization.

Ward: Smart!

LG: Yep. We won the strike; the guys learned their own power. Contracts that had been kicking around for six or eight months were wrapped up.

Ward: Any brushes with the cops on picket lines?

LG: We had some over in the East Bay. I forget the name of the cop over there - Brown or something - a thoroughly impossible guy.

Ward: Was he in Berkeley or Oakland?

LG: Oakland; he made a practice of rousting the pickets all the time. Oakland had an anti-picketing ordinance.

Ward: Well, they all did.

LG: Yes; we didn't pay any attention to the one in San Francisco. The first time they made an attempt to enforce it in San Francisco was around this Woolworth beef. They used the ordinance to try to confine the number of pickets. We had all kinds of guys up there and most of them were there for solid trade union reasons, but the fact that there were also a lot of attractive young girls on the picket line wasn't a handicap in getting our guys to go out there. They sort of filled up the San Francisco jails arresting everybody over a certain number.

Ward: I'm pretty sure that the repeal of the anti-picketing ordinance began in Berkeley; there was quite a beef there with the Berkeley police. Do you recall anything about that?

LG: It was Woolworth; it might have arisen because we had spread the strike in Woolworth over to the branch stores.

Ward: How close did you come to achieving all of your aims, 75%, 90%?

LG: Oh, we got the wage increases we were after or most of them. I'd say we won in terms of getting a contract, getting union recognition, getting vacations written into the contract - something that was new - establishing seniority, particularly getting hiring through the warehouse hall for extra labor; not the same as longshore because it was not a complete rotation of all workers; but it was the question of any replacements being called out of the hall, any new employees being called out of the hall.

You can establish a real grip over the industry in the sense that the employer can't go out and hire willy-nilly and choose a lot of people who would be hostile to the union. Those were the big demands; including preference of employment. Preference of employment was good for union people; an employer calling the hall: "I need so many guys to discharge a freight car."

LG: At the same time the union was going through a very intense campaign against what was called "hiring off the street". Many of our own guys had become accustomed, before they became members of the union, to go shopping around at the various warehouses to pick up a day's work, a half day's work. Preference meant doubling back and getting a good deal more discipline out of our own people so as to knock off things like hiring off the street or going job-shopping.

The hiring halls became well established. An interesting sideline is that we did not place much emphasis on the union shop; in those days we didn't even have the union shop in the contract.

Ward: You didn't ask for a check-off of dues or anything like that?

LG: No - no. It was a wholly different attitude. Sure, institutions change and times change and requirements change. But our attitude in those days was if we could get preference of employment through the hall that was enough in the way of guarantees of union security.

Then, the question would come along, "Well, if someone won't pay his dues?" We wouldn't even have the business agents collect dues on the job. People had to come down to the hall and pay their dues. We wanted that direct contact with the union. Same reason, we established compulsory attendance at membership meetings and a fine for non-attendance. The whole thing was built around the basic concept that the only way to build a union was to see to it that the membership took part.

Ward: You got compulsory attendance from the longshore experience?

LG: Yes, sure, and the preference of employment we also got from the longshoremen. To this day the longshoremen don't have a union shop, even though there is a provision in the contract that permits the union to get a union shop any time it wants it. They prefer preference of employment and the hiring hall, which is a much more effective weapon.

LG: When some guy would say, "Well, look, there is so-and-so and this son-of-a-gun won't join the union on the job or come up with his dues," the attitude at that time was, "Look, if you guys can't take care of a character like that when he's walking alongside of a pile or a stack of canned goods, you have no business even being in the union." So, that turned it around where it belonged.

Ward: Well, that's the way you guys built a stronger union by making the guys take care of the slacker?

LG: Right. In other words, it had within it what I think is still the fundamental strength of the union; it could only spring from the membership itself. It's not going to come by how many dollars they have in the treasury or how many officers you can hire; the nub of the thing had to be the direct participation of the members; to my mind that still remains the nub of any effective organization.

Ward: All right. What were the things you tried to get by the strike that you ended up not obtaining? If any?

LG: I'm not sure if we got the uniform 40-hour week. I'm not quite sure whether we won that one. I do believe that we got the wages we were demanding or very close to it. We did get the big thing, preference of employment and the use of the hiring hall. I doubt whether we got the full vacation demands which we had -

Ward: How much did you demand?

LG: I think it was one (week) after one (year) and two (weeks) after two (years).

Ward: Yes, that was the usual thing at that time.

LG: Bear in mind that most of these companies had no vacations, or if they did have vacations it was on a hit-and-miss basis, depending on who the individual was; more a personal favor. We did not have a great proliferation of demands. There was no struggle for health and welfare, no attempt to set up a pension plan. I doubt whether we introduced

LG: sick leave. We got that later. Seniority was a very big thing and that one we did win.

It would be worth while somebody doing a bit of work to see what happened with other unions around here as a result of some of our organizing demands and the good fortune of winning them. I distinctly remember that at that time the teamsters did not have seniority in their contract. The warehousemen got it first.

That reflected the general attitude in the teamsters; they negotiated the wage scale; after that every guy was on his own to hold that job. That's the reason that outfits like Walkup got the reputation of "Walkup - Rundown". If the men couldn't meet the work, that was just too bad. Introducing the concept of seniority was a very big thing.

Another important thing we got was the recognition of stewards. To us the steward system was extremely important; this was a whole layer of leadership with daily contact with the membership on everything from the application of the contract to grievances, the importance of preference and everything else.

Some of the old line unions had absolutely no concept of the steward system, or were hostile to it. I recall an instance in the Labor Council where we reported some newly signed agreements - some that we might have gotten after a day or two of strike, because we had that kind of speed. We were reporting, among other things, that the steward system was recognized and we were setting it up.

John O'Connell, in an impassioned speech, said, "They talk about steward systems - that's not true at all - that's just an attempt to build a Soviet inside the warehouses." Where the association of a steward system and Soviets came from, I have no idea. (laughter) Today, of course, that's accepted, like coffee in the morning.

The Move To The CIO

Ward: When the strike was settled, you went back to work in the car gang?

LG: Yes.

Ward: What was your position in the union, then?

LG: I was vice-president of the union. I had been elected vice-president in the 1936 elections; that was not a full-time office.

Ward: Obviously not, if you were working in the car gang.

LG: No. I think we had only two or three fulltime officers.

Ward: How long did you continue working in private industry?

LG: I continued with that, though some of it became hit-and-miss, when we had a lot of these organizing pitches going.

Ward: You mean, sometimes you would be too busy with union work to be working on the regular job?

LG: That's right. Although, one of the things with the car gangs, it was not entirely steady work.

Ward: I see.

LG: Some days you would be very busy and other days . . . It was quite common, oh, if you picked up four days in a week, you were doing fairly good. Five days was a good week.

Ward: When you were out doing union organizing, were you paid for that time?

LG: As I recall, most of this work was all volunteer work.

Ward: Even though you had to lay off in order to do it?

LG: Yes. There's another distinction between the union in those days and what happened later. The whole idea of someone being paid by the union for working on a committee, attending the Labor Council meeting, was absolutely unknown; you just did it, that's all.

Ward: And those weren't the days when a guy ran for office so he could get rich.

LG: Oh, one of the things that came out of the '36 strike, was that we settled before the maritime strike ended. Bear in mind that we went out on strike at the same time and that the impetus for the organization of warehousing was the role the warehouses played during the '34 strike. On the other hand, the '36 strike differed enormously from the '34 strike as to how the employers approached it. There was no attempt to run scabs; in '36 in many ways it was more of a seamen's strike than a longshore strike.

The major push, as I recall, was an attempt on the part of the employers to get rid of the seamen's hiring halls. I don't recall the longshore demands playing that much of a prominent role in the '36 strike. The union just stuck together against a counter-offensive on the part of the employers.

Ward: Then it wasn't damaging to the maritime strike, as such, for you to settle first?

LG: It did them no harm. I recall we had some conversations with them and I guess Harry (Bridges) must have been there and some of the maritime guys.

Ward: (Harry) Lundeberg?*

LG: Lundeberg was still with the Maritime Federation; some of his manoeuvering that later led to the breaking up of the Federation was already taking form.

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* (Leader of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific.)

LG: There was a big hassle around the paper there - it was called the "Voice of the Federation". Barney Mayes was editor and he had a peculiar slant on life all of his own; not very friendly to us, anyway. There was a lengthy beef where finally he got heaved out as editor. There was no damage done by our settling and the general feeling was that it was for the good.

Ward: And there was no resentment on the part of the longshore union?

LG: No, none at all, because there was no attempt to use the warehouses as a diversion point for cargo and no attempt to bring any cargo down to the ships; the problem didn't exist. In addition, when the strike was over, we voted $1,000 a week to help the longshoremen.

Ward: You had money by that time?

LG: Right. Money that came in because of a lot of organizing, and we felt quite affluent.

Ward: When did you go full time?

LG: That was later in 1937. We had the Pacific Coast District convention -

Ward: You were still in the ILA?

LG: Still in the ILA. We had a Pacific Coast District convention in Seattle in 1937. It was around April or May, and it was at this convention where the decision was made to take a referendum on joining the CIO, (first called the Committee for Industrial Organization; later becoming the Congress of Industrial Organizations) because the CIO was definitely moving all over the country by that time. The general feeling was that we belonged with them, although we weren't leaving the AF of L, (American Federation of Labor).

We thought that part of our job was to see whether or not we could get the AF of L to adopt the principles of industrial organization and to accept industrial unions in the whole structure. So it wasn't a complete breach.

LG: There was a beginning of a breach between the teamsters and ourselves. Dave Beck was in power by then: Tobin (Dan Tobin, former president of the Teamsters' International) was gone. I recall when we were up in Seattle that time, there was an attempt on the part of the teamsters and Dave Beck to move against the warehouse local we had in Seattle. As a matter of fact, they moved fairly successfully and broke the warehouse organization there.

A lot of hostilities that carried on for a number of years began to develop at that point. I think it was during 1937 when we were up there, the P-I was on strike -

Ward: The Post Intelligencer (a Seattle newspaper) ?

LG: Right. I remember meeting Anna - the daughter of Franklin D. Roosevelt - Boettiger?

Ward: Boettiger, yes. Her husband was the publisher.

LG: I remember meeting her during that strike - I don't know how. Apparently, she was fairly friendly to the strikers.

Ward: Yes, I think that was true. That was a Hearst paper?

LG: Right. And she was at some little gathering of ours; I recall everybody having a pretty good time; I wound up playing some revolutionary songs on the piano. That didn't seem to offend her or take her aback. She seemed like an awfully good sport.

Harry had met with Joe Ryan (president of the ILA) and other parts of the maritime industry in an attempt to see whether the whole maritime group could move over (to the CIO). He met with no accord of any kind from Lundeberg and Joe Ryan of the ILA.

At one time, as I recall, Harry made a straightforward proposition to Joe Ryan to take a national referendum in the ILA on whether to go into the CIO. If the majority voted not, we wouldn't go either. But Ryan would have no part of that.

LG: So we voted as a Pacific Coast District to take a referendum and we voted to go into the CIO.

Ward: That referendum would have been held in - probably May or June of '37?

LG: In mid-1937, right.

Ward: And you were vice-president of Local 38-44 and you were technically, at least, a working stiff?

LG: Right.

Ward: Okay, then the referendum took place; did your position change?

LG: Yep. What happened after that was Harry (Bridges) was designated Pacific Coast Director of the CIO. I guess he designated me, or I was designated by the national office, I don't recall which, as Northern California Director. In other words, a sub-title; at that point I went to work full-time for the CIO.

Ward: You never did work full-time for Local 38-44?

LG: I don't believe so.

Ward: One day you were in the car gang and the next day you were something else?

LG: That's right. Anyway, it was at that point that I went to work full-time for the labor movement. The job there was working together with any unions that belonged to the CIO, or giving any other unions who wanted to come into the CIO a hand. Although during that same time we continued our membership in the Labor Council.

Ward: For how long?

LG: Until they heaved us out. The Labor Council had become during 1937 perhaps the most active labor forum that the country had ever seen. Debates went on endlessly on the whole question of industrial organization, rank-and-file organization, the need of the labor movement to expand. We maintained very good friends and close allies.

Ward: In many labor organizations at that time the guys who stayed up the latest carried the vote.

LG: No. Meetings lasted until 11-12 o'clock at night, but it wasn't the business of the delegates drifting off. As a matter of fact, it was very tough for a visitor to get in, even, because it had a very small gallery section. I recall Terry coming down there and she got a seat only because I was a delegate and the guy at the door saw to it that she got a place to sit. There were times when there were just as many people outside the Labor Council on the street picking up news as to what was going on as there were inside.

We had no intention of leaving. I never thought that we left the AF of L; they left us. About that time, another thing was taking place which is rather important. Before Dave Beck took power Tobin, who was still head of the Teamsters' Union, and Joe Ryan reached an agreement on dividing up the warehouse field; where the warehousemen who were in the ILA would be confined to the waterfront warehouses, and the teamsters would have all the warehouses uptown.

Bear in mind that at the time we got going the teamsters were ignoring the warehousemen completely. The fact that we began to organize with a good deal of success became quite a motive for the teamsters to begin to change.

Anyway, this agreement between the teamsters and the ILA then began to be effectuated, or an attempt was made to implement it by William Green, (president of the AF of L). For a while almost every Labor Council we'd attend, there would be another telegram from William Green parcelling out the warehousemen like so many bunches of bananas; this belonged to the Teamsters Union; some hardware warehouse belonged to the Carpenters Union, or a plumbing warehouse belonged to the Plumbers' Union.

They themselves didn't know what they were doing, because on the one hand they were completely craft organizations; on the other hand they were determined that this stupid fight against the formation of the CIO would go on.

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(Interview 7: 28 March, 1978)##

Ward: All right, you were about to tell what went on inside and outside the Labor Council while the deliberations were in progress.

LG: What was going on inside the Council was the debating of the merits of an idea that had taken form within the labor movement for years. We were not arguing with the crafts, but our position was that unless the mass of workers could be organized, the people who were not craftsmen - and after all that included a majority of the workers, whether it be in the bay area or anywhere else in the country - even the crafts themselves would find their situation pretty desperate at times and be subject to every vagary of the employer's position, such as the American Plan.

These debates were worthwhile. Even in recent years you still run into some oldtimer who had been a delegate to the Labor Council and the reminiscing and remembrance of those debates still stands out in his mind as perhaps the finest chapter in the whole history of the Labor Council.

The march inland was rubbing off on all kinds of unions, so that unions which had been either dormant or completely out of business suddenly took life again. It was no accident that San Francisco saw one of the first organizations of retail clerks. That Woolworth strike was one of the examples that took place, although the warehousemen also had a strike against Woolworth then. Those things tied in together; the importance of making San Francisco a real union town. This was an expression that was easily understood.

There was no reason why the whole town should not be unionized; no reason why just because some worker happened to be in a non-craft organization he would be ignored. It was a period where even the Dishwashers' Union began to flourish. They

LG: were part of the hotel group; at one time the only groups that carried any weight among the hotel and restaurant employees were primarily the cooks and waiters and bartenders - all of them in three separate little locals. When it came to the large installations such as cafeterias and things of that sort, they only had a handful, if anybody.

A lot of the organization was literally stimulated by the waterfront. I remember, for example, there was an old Clinton Cafeteria down at lower Market Street, somewhere around Market and Steuart. I think it was Clinton or Foster - I'm not sure which. The culinary workers had made some progress in organization, but not enough; a number of us decided to get in the act.

That meant, oh, maybe 50 or 60 of us going in there one morning, occupying every seat, ordering a cup of coffee and sitting there; that's all. Three or four hours of that and the company gets the idea pretty quick that unless they recognize the union their chance of business could be pretty thin.

Like barber shops on the waterfront; all had to organize at once. The idea that they could operate non-union was completely unacceptable. Everybody got in the act. These things stimulated the organizations throughout the city. It also resulted in us making some awfully good friends and supporters.

There were some real characters in the Labor Council. Some of them, very colorful guys, men who became good friends of ours, very loyal. I remember Hugo Ernst - he was with the Hotel and Culinary Workers and he had his chair where he sat on Labor Council nights. We all knew it because we were already delegates, but apparently some new delegate came to the Labor Council and took his chair. Hugo Ernst carried a cane - whether he actually needed it or not, I don't know - always had a carnation in his button hole. I'm not sure whether he wore spats at the time -

Ward: He was supposed to have -

LG: I think so; he was a character. He walked into the Labor Council and here is this man sitting in his chair. He stood there and tapped the chair a couple of times with his cane. This guy is getting a little bit embarrassed - doesn't know what to do - and somebody leans over and says, "Get the hell out - that's Hugo Ernst's chair."

There's a guy like George Kidwell, who was a delegate to the Council from the Bakery Wagon Drivers. One of his protégés was Wendell Phillips, who retired at the same time I did. George Kidwell - that man was just like a rock - just a good, strong -

Ward: His other protégé was (Jack) Shelley -

LG: Yeah, Shelley was the other one. Shelley became head of the Labor Council, became a member of the Sacramento Legislature -

Ward: State senator -

LG: Senator and then went on to become a congressman and then mayor. People like that were pretty colorful. John O'Connell in his own peculiar way was a unionist - no question about that - but in the oldest possible tradition; one who felt so keenly about observing every little bit of protocol within the Labor Council. I guess we were quite a chore to him because when we'd make reports of unions to announce how many places had been organized, how many had been on strike and so on! Before a union was given strike sanction the Labor Council would try to arrange sessions between the union involved and the employer involved to see what could be done to mediate the differences. Well, we had made a decision.

We couldn't run the risk of getting bogged down. We were being bogged down enough, as it was, by the old Labor Relations Act.

Ward: It took too long?

LG: After all, if there's anything that the employers and their lawyers know it's how to buy time - stall indefinitely. So, you'd go in and organize a

LG: place, try to meet with the employer and get recognition of the union, preference of employment, sit down and bargain. If the employer questioned you, we'd say, "Okay, tomorrow morning you be here early and count the number of people outside. If there are more people outside than inside, you'd better recognize us. If there are more inside than outside, you win." It was just that simple.

It's no wonder that the Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Association got into quite a frenzy over these things. They almost identified unionism, communism and revolution as all one and the same thing, particularly this kind of unionism. John O'Connell reflected that.

But there were also men in there like Dan Del Carlo. He came from the building trades, the Glaziers Union; always remained a very close friend of the ILWU; he was a former Wobbly. There were a number of guys who had been Wobblies and later settled in San Francisco and became part of the trade union movement. There are men like Joe Murphy, a wonderful character in his own right, also a former Wobbly. I think he has the best collection of Wobbly literature and songs of anybody on the Coast.

Ward: The machinists were very friendly too?

LG: Very, very friendly at the time. As a matter of fact, two of them lost out in the machinists in a very ill-calculated strike at the end of World War II - (Harry) Hook and (Ed) Dillon. Hook turned up as a witness against Harry later on; not Dillon. The waterfront machinists - the Machinists Union through their waterfront division - that's more accurate because they were all members of Lodge 68 - were part of the Maritime Federation.

We also helped out any number of unions, even the union from which George Johns, who later became the secretary of the Labor Council, came from. Those were the Cigar Clerks, whose main job was not really selling cigarettes or cigars but playing this "36" game - bet a quarter against the house on rolling of dice, to see if you could win. Anyway, it was a form of half-baked, legalized gambling.

LG: It was tolerated in the city just like dice for drinks is still acceptable around San Francisco. Liars dice. Bull dice, you know. Ship, Captain and Crew. Razzle-dazzle. You name it. All the various games; although in other parts of the country, like Los Angeles, you never see a dice box. It's a characteristic of the city and its tolerance of certain things. Kyne's and -

Ward: Corbett's. You used to see the D.A. (District Attorney) at Kyne's on election night.

LG: And every once in a while some reporter would go down and talk to (Tom) Kyne and ask him how the odds were running. We also would venture a couple of bucks there. The wealthy candidate would throw money into Kyne's, because this is one way to influence the election. After all, a number of people are influenced by the newspaper stories saying that the odds against someone winning are four to one, five to one, or what have you.

Ward: Well, let's get back - you ran against John O'Connell for secretary at one time, didn't you?

LG: Hmmm. That must have been late in 1936 or sometime in 1937. Oh, somebody came up to me and said, "What do you think about running against him?" Heck, we didn't have much use for him - he was always blasting us. John O'Connell had strong friends in the Labor Council like John McLaughlin of the teamsters; he thought pretty much the same way as McLaughlin. And I said, "Fine, I'll run - I just hope I'm not elected;" of all the jobs I didn't want would be secretary of the Labor Council.

I did fairly well. The fascinating thing was people coming out of the woodwork from every direction. Delegates who had been rounded up to be sure to vote that night. We never had an attendance like it.

Ward: I think you said they brought them in on stretchers.

LG: Damn near. Anyway, the Labor Council was a lively affair - no question about it.

Ward: You were telling about the weekly telegrams coming from William Green, and about how Harry (Bridges) manoeuvered in that -

LG: It was a combination of two things that were coming to a head; one was the attempt to effectuate that agreement between Joe Ryan and Dan Tobin on jurisdiction. And the other was the attempt on the part of the central leadership of the AF of L to decapitate the CIO here, and specifically to get us expelled from the Labor Council.

Our position was that while we thought the CIO was a good thing, we felt it would be best to stay in the AF of L, be affiliated with the CIO and at the same time campaign for the acceptance of the CIO principles by the American Federation of Labor.

In retrospect, I still think that position was very sound. For one thing, I think it had an enormous impact on those delegates. Secondly, I think it gave a whole progressive tone to the San Francisco Labor Council and became a really genuine educational experience.

But in the meantime, the AF of L had taken the position that if you belonged to the CIO you were guilty of dual unionism. You haven't heard that expression for a long, long time. In those days "dual unionism" was an expression in constant use.

As a matter of fact, there were organizations that literally tried to do the very same thing we did, like the International Typographical Union. They were in the AF of L; they supported the CIO. The time they broke with the AF of L was when the AF of L levied an assessment of so much a member per month on all the international unions to carry on the fight against the CIO. The ITU (International Typographical Union) refused to pay. They said, "You're simply asking us for money to break down industrial organization and we'll be no part of it.

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Ward: Lou, you were saying -

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LG: These telegrams would threaten to lift the charter of the San Francisco Labor Council unless the dual unionists, namely, outfits like the ILWU, were heaved out. No question in my mind that had there been any kind of an open, above-board vote without the threat of yanking the charter, we would have won hands down.

The delegates there, with the exception of perhaps a couple of awfully stiff-necked and hard-bitten guys, definitely would have stuck with us, because that had been one of the by-products of the maritime and general strike and the march inland, and the enormous benefit it had done to all kinds of other unions. You had a tremendous influx of young people for the first time, instead of a Labor Council that was comprised of people in their dotage.

So it was under the gun of these threats that a lot of these debates took place; a lot of parliamentary manoeuvering. We'd meet before the Labor Council meeting with our friends - kick the gong around. The whole excitement of the Labor Council resulted in an enormous attendance, not only by the delegates; there would be nights when there were almost as many people outside the Labor Council as there were inside. People came because it was the best show in town and without charge.

Funny things used to happen in the Labor Council. Like one night, the argument had gone very, very late. This delegate, Tony Cancilla - a very tough guy - of the Cab Drivers Union - got up to make a point of order. Jack Shelley was in the chair. Shelley asked him, "What's your point of order?" "Oh, I just want to say one thing, if this argument keeps up this way there's going to be a mad dash for the door and somebody ain't going to make it."

Another night, for example, when we were determined to try to prevent a vote on Green's telegram of expulsion, Harry made a suggestion. Harry is a good parliamentarian, even though he

LG: sometimes had what you'd call "Bridges' Rules of Order". He also knew Roberts' Rules of Order and Cushing's Manual very well.

He suggested, "Why don't we go into a committee of the whole?" The advantage of a committee of the whole is that you can argue every single merit of an issue without necessarily making motions, amendments, amendments to amendments, voting down the whole thing. It's a free and open debate around an issue until the assemblage has decided okay, we've heard all the arguments and we're now prepared to take motions.

So when this telegram was read Harry gets up and says, "Mr. Chairman, I make a motion we go into a committee of the whole." Jack Shelley didn't see anything wrong with that and we went into the committee of the whole. The debate must have gone on an hour and a half, maybe two hours when somebody got up and said, "All right Mr. Chairman, we've heard enough. I make a motion we accept the telegram from President Green."

Harry jumps up and says, "Sorry, Mr. Chairman, that motion is out of order." Shelley is sort of riffling through the Rules of Order and says, "I guess you're right, Harry, it is out of order." Somebody else gets up and makes another motion, "I move we throw out these dual unionists." Harry is on his feet again and says, "Sorry, Mr. Chairman, but that's contrary to Roberts' Rules of Order."

Finally, it goes round and round on these points of order with Jack Shelley having to uphold Harry on these things. Finally, Shelley in complete frustration turns to Harry, "Look, Harry, you got us into this damn thing; how do we get out?" Apparently, the only motion that is acceptable under those terms is to rise and report, which simply means that you return to the formal structure of a meeting, with making motions, amendments and so on.

Ward: By that time, everybody wanted to go home?

The Teamster Blockade

LG: That's right; that took care of that night. As a backwash of the whole 1937 teamster blockade, there was a good deal of friction. Beck was on the move. He had some pretty tough eggs, and other things were developing that were bound to lead to trouble.

The teamsters had chartered a warehouse local in the San Francisco area, Local 860. Later they acceded to the employers' demands for so-called industry-wide contracts, but already they were sort of nibbling at our flanks in some warehouses; some employers were stampeded into signing with them before we got around.

There had been incidents outside (the Labor Council meetings); there would be some flare-ups, although in the main, considering the number of people that would turn up and the intensity of the debates, there was amazingly little in the way of outbreaks.

Ward: I think you said that sometimes there would be a couple of hundred guys outside?

LG: Not uncommon at all.

Ward: Waiting to see what happened?

LG: Yes, waiting to see what happened. Part of it also was a feeling that the delegates inside were trying to protect their interests; perhaps even a certain feeling of a show of strength in support of their delegates; and also to be around if something untoward did happen, which it didn't - never in the Labor Council. Outside the Labor Council, yes.

Gene Paton was one of the delegates to the Labor Council and there was a bar right across the street from the Labor Temple at 16th and Capp Streets. Pat was having a drink with (Swan) Swede Carlson. Swede Carlson was one of our early members and he had been a pretty good light heavyweight in his day. He was no longer in that light

Tom Mooney Freedom Parade up Market Street, San Francisco, January 8, 1939. Tom Mooney, hand raised; to his left, Louis Goldblatt; behind him, George Kidwell, State Dir. of Industrial Relations.

Teamster Blockade, San Francisco Waterfront, 1937. Louis Goldblatt, center; Ernie Woods, at right with button; Clarence Paton, at extreme left without hat.

LG: heavy-weight class, since he had picked up a few pounds, but he was a strong guy, tough.

Pat was always a very outspoken guy. Some teamsters were in the bar and Pat said something and one of the teamsters copped a Sunday on him and down he went. And before Swede could turn around, somebody whacked him and down he went.

The way Swede picked up the story he says, "So, I shook my head and here was Pat on the floor and there's no need for both of us to be down there, so I got up and went to work."

Apparently Swede just cleaned up the joint - flattened several guys. One guy finally flying through the door, draped over a car. While Swede was not a delegate to the Labor Council, having him around generated a certain respect.

Ward: Remembering him, I would think so.

LG: One of the by-products was that people said, "Okay, don't screw with these guys, that's all - argue with them, fine, but if you want to go the hard way, it's a two-way street." You ask any of the reporters who covered those debates. One of them who was most fascinated was Art Eggleston from the San Francisco Chronicle.

Ward: He used to have a column specifically on labor and its problems.

LG: That's right. It was the first labor column that I know of around here.

At any rate, by the end of 1937 we were expelled. That happened in the Alameda (County) Labor Council too. One Labor Council where they were having a hell of a job trying to expel us was over in Contra Costa (County). This wasn't just expelling these wild, hairy-assed guys from Longshore and Warehouse.

There, you had all kinds of people like the Oil Workers, Rubber; Steel were there; the old Pioneer Rubber plant. You had the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers at Selby. You had the guys who

LG: made different powder and dynamite products at Hercules (formerly Hercules Powder Company, now part of Hercules, Incorporated); you had a whole string of industrial plants. Actually in terms of proportionate relationships the craft unions weren't nearly as important, and they were obviously reluctant to heave out the industrial unions.

I recall going to a meeting of the Contra Costa Labor Council with Paul Heide. That long drink of water is an unusual character. I never thought the guy was so strong but we'd gone to one of these little arcades, I think it was in Seattle - he also got tangled up with some teamsters in a fight there too - where they had these punching bags where you could register how hard you could hit it. Paul says, "I think I could hit that thing pretty hard." And he whacked it right off its hanging.

So, Paul was also a very courageous guy. We walked into the Contra Costa Labor Council and there was someone from William Green's office presiding. He turned up later in Crockett in 1938 where an attempt was made to break the ILWU. Paul and I walked in and somebody else was with us; it could have been Ham.

Ward: Ham?

LG: (August) Hemenez - "Ham and Eggs" from Crockett. And as we walked in, this guy dropped the gavel and said, "The charter is hereby suspended." That was the end; never any debate, never any discussion.

Ward: Did that happen in San Francisco too? Was there any vote?

LG: No, in San Francisco the delegates finally voted to expel us; either that or surrender the charter. And they weren't ready to surrender the charter. I don't think anybody thought seriously that that sort of a fight was in order and that we could make it. Your proportionate relationship in a city like San Francisco between craft and industrial unions is overwhelmingly towards the crafts.

Ward: It's the reverse of the Contra Costa situation?

LG: Exactly the reverse, right. By that time we were setting up the CIO and keeping busy. This was at the tail end of 1937, and I had been appointed Northern California Director of the CIO.

Ward: And your working relationship with Harry Bridges had existed some time before that?

LG: Yes, not closely, obviously, because Harry was up to his ass with the Maritime Federation; some of the conflicts in the Labor Council were also reflected in the Federation. The attempt, for example, on Harry's part and the Longshore division to see whether or not we could get the maritime unions, as a group, to move into the CIO. There were a number of efforts made in that direction, like that of John L. Lewis* to set up a whole maritime section of the CIO; but people like Lundeberg and (Vincent) Malone of the Firemen's Union were dead set against it.

There was a continual struggle around the Federation which went into decline after the '36 strike and began to phase out its effectiveness. All this was bound to preoccupy Harry; he was also head of the Pacific Coast District of the ILA, remember that.

As a matter of fact, (Harvey) Carty, who had been president of Local 38-44 and had been removed by petition, sealed his own fate in 1935 when he voted against Harry to be head of the Pacific Coast Division of the ILA. And there were the attempts on the part of Pedro Pete (Peterson) in L. A. and the Dirty Dozen, as they called them -

Ward: The Dirty Dozen, would you elaborate on what that was?

LG: Guys who were tied to the ILA, even after it went to the CIO. Pedro Pete was the leader of the group; I think he was on the ILA payroll for some time afterward, after we went CIO.

Ward: I know he was on somebody's AF of L payroll years later, in the forties.

*Founder of the CIO

LG: That's right. So, that struggle was on. The National Labor Relations Board had used what they called the globe election theory in the case of our affiliation with the CIO. In other words, where you could carve out parts - even though we had a Pacific Coast District contract - it was a west coast agreement, you see.

Locals, according to the NLRB, could leave; so three ports - Tacoma, Port Angeles and Anacortes - Port Angeles and Anacortes are tiny locals, refused to affiliate to the CIO; remained in the ILA for some years, and finally came back into the ILWU, somewhere in the late forties, I believe.

Anyway, Harry had his hands full with the organizing drive and the almost endless number of struggles.

I can hardly recall a period where we didn't have a strike on somewhere. They were just popping all the time. You never fiddled around with anything more than a one-year contract. And it meant that you not only had your major contract negotiations, but with your organizing push, you also had an almost continuous stream of strikes as well. So that while we attended the Maritime Federation meetings we also attended the district meetings of the ILA; the relationship was not all that close.

Ward: Well, here you were at the age of 26 or 27 with one big strike behind you, a rather successful strike, and you had your first full-time trade union job. That was the situation?

LG: Right. During the earlier period I had been elected vice-president of Local 38-44 in the 1936 elections. That was the time when Gene Paton became president, and an old-timer named C. T. Quirey who continued as secretary of 38-44 and then of Local 6; he was elected.

Robertson was business agent at the time and (Ray) Tarling was another. I mentioned him in conversation. Some time in 1937 he mis-directed a letter and it got into the hands of somebody who was a friend of the union - complete stranger,

LG: though. It got to us and we were about to go ahead with a trial; simply dropped the information to Tarling that we had it. He was reporting on organization that was going on at Western Sugar, among other places. Anyway he promptly took off and that was the last we saw of him.

By the way, there was a period when almost all of these employers that we were bumping into were hiring Pinkertons (employees of a detective agency). As a matter of fact, (J. Paul) St. Sure later admitted that almost all of the big employers employed Pinkertons, and I don't mean a Pinkerton guard standing outside the door or wearing a Pinkerton uniform; none of that crap. They were people employed as warehousemen, they were workers in the plant, their job being to report every bit of union activity and particularly to single out the ring leaders.

How much they helped the employer, I don't know. They did in a few cases where they would finger somebody and then the employer would find some other reason to can him, such as coming in a few minutes late or having a shot of whiskey at lunch time. But not in terms of supplying any information to the employer which he couldn't get by just reading our union paper or leaflets which we were putting out all the time - or by calling us.

I think the employers finally decided this was a complete waste of money. Most of these guys were not effectual in dissuading anybody from joining a union. There was just too much of a wave going on. As a matter of fact, if somebody made a crack, "Oh, the hell with the union," people might think he was a Pinkerton when he was not.

Ward: Well, in a sense life became somewhat different for you when you took on this full-time job. I imagine that one of the things that you were doing was preparing for the formation of the (California) State CIO Council.

LG: Yes. Once the expulsion of the CIO unions from the AF of L was a fait accompli, obviously, the fight had to shift. For our own self-protection

LG: and our own effectiveness it meant that we had to set up the CIO Council, help out wherever we could with organizational drives, help the weaker unions, also help some of the bigger unions when they needed a hand.

I recall making an awful lot of mileage. It was pretty common for me to be driving to L. A. and San Diego, a few days there, stopping along the route with various groups; and to cover everything from San Diego up to Redding . . .

Ward: Not to mention Sacramento.

LG: Not to mention Sacramento, because I also became head of Labor's Non-Partisan League. Labor's Non-Partisan League was really a (political) alter ego of the CIO. It might have had a few other organizations in it, but not many.

I remember it was a continuous roundy-go-roundy of work. I remember meeting with newspaper people, some of whom later successfully helped to organize the San Diego Union -

Ward: Brodie?

LG: Yes, Brodie - Bill Brodie was one of them. A slight, small fellow, very aggressive.

Ward: He became a farmer, I understand.

LG: He was a good man. It also meant trying to help out in the organizational pitch we had going on among the Fishermen in San Diego. I got to know the Slovonians very well. I made my first trip to Mexico City on their behalf; I think that was in late 1937. I went down to Mexico City.

I met Lombardo Toledano (head of the Mexican labor movement); as a matter of fact, when we had a convention of the CIO in San Diego, we made an effort to have Lombardo Toledano come in. At that time he was persona non grata with the U. S. government. Later on he did speak at one of our conventions together with the man who translated for him, Alejandro Carillo, who later became the

LG: governor of Mexico City, D.F.

I went down there on behalf of the Fishermen because somebody had run through a bill in the Cortes (legislature) in Mexico which in effect would prohibit all seine fishing. What they did, was shove seine fishing in with drag-nets, gill nets, and so forth.

The Slovonians were part of the friendly group in the Fishermen; they were the most effectively organized. The Fishermen ran to three nationalities in San Diego and one in San Pedro. You had the Slovonian fishermen who were the dominant group in San Pedro; they invariably used purse seine nets for catching tuna. You had your Italian fishermen - not a very large group - and some of them used purse seine nets, but most of them used hook and line.

The balance of the group were Japanese fishermen - Japanese-American, who used unbarbed hooks. Some of them were not American born, but there were both Nisei (second generation) and Issei (first generation) among them. The Japanese would fish off these platforms on unbarbed hooks. What they would do was chum (a type of fish) the waters -

Ward: Chum?

LG: You chum the waters by throwing bait out there. And then the fish all come in a circle and mill around them; they keep chuming so that the school would be kept fairly close to the tuna boat and then they would fish with these unbarbed hooks. The tuna would snap at the hooks which shone like chum and the fishermen would flip the tuna over their shoulders into the hold of the ship.

And if they ran into a particularly big school of tuna . . . . . I don't know if you've ever seen this: there could be two men on one line, sometimes three men on one line, and all three would have to work together to hook the tuna and flip them into the ship.

Ward: Because the tuna were so big?

LG: Some tuna, yes. When tuna began running, say, 150 pounds, you're not going to yank that out. If you did it by hook and line, you would be at it forever. When they'd hit a school of tuna, it was pretty common for them to work 48 hours in a row. But that's the way the industry is; San Diego was getting big; a lot of the fishermen were Portuguese. They used both bait and seines.

Ward: A lot of this fishing went on in Mexican waters, apparently.

LG: Yes, they were doing a lot of fishing in Mexican waters, plus the fact that they used to get some of their bait - anchovies - toward the lower part of Baja California. Anyway, if this bill passed, it would have effectively knocked out the Slovonian fishermen, so I took a bounce down there and things fell in place for me pretty well. Luckily, I met almost everybody I wanted to meet very quickly -

Ward: You had the help of Toledano?

LG: Toledano, yes, he was very friendly. As a matter of fact, Toledano had been supported by John L. Lewis; he knew everyone around there and he was able to steer me. Some attorneys I met down there knew the ropes, one of whom was a bull fighter aficionado. He had all the brands of the famous bulls around his office and I went out to the bullfights with him.

We found out that the ones who had gotten that bill through were the Van Camp* interests, which really owned most of the Japanese boats or held mortgages on them.

Ward: And they wanted to get the seine fishermen out of the competition.

LG: Right; what you do is knock off the purse seiners and you've got the only tuna in town. At that time (Lazaro) Cardenas was president of Mexico, a fine, progressive man, you see, and people like Toledano were very close to him. Anyway, somehow

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*Van Camp Seafood Company

LG: the newspapers got in the act; and then I recall that there was some half-assed California legislator who went down there.

Ward: That would be one of several, I can't remember who . . . .

LG: I can't remember which one it was. He went down there supporting the Van Camp interests. But this got into a good, public debate and no harm done at all.

They had some people who looked me up, including a young guy who manned a small Coast Guard vessel in Baja California, in the gulf; what they call the Sea of Cortez. He was telling how the Japanese had all kinds of concessions there, such as in Guaymas - shrimp fishing.

They were supposed to teach the Mexicans the technique - part of the reciprocity for the concessions. All they taught the Mexicans was how to cut off the heads. He was angry as could be, and very helpful. He also insisted that they had the best coastwise geodetic survey of Mexican waters that anybody ever had. Well, it got to be quite a roundy-go-roundy and we won that one hands down. Cardenas killed the bill, yes.

Ward: Oh, I see, he had veto power.

LG: Oh, yes. He had veto power, the bill had already passed, but then he killed it. That was my first trip to Mexico City.

Ward: So, we formed the State CIO Council?

LG: The CIO convention took place at the Royal Palms Hotel in August, 1938. That was when the State Council was set up and I was elected fulltime secretary-treasurer.

Ward: And (Philip M. Connelly of the Newspaper Guild) Connelly was elected president -

LG: Later on there was some change in that -

Ward: Yes, later on, but he was the president for two, three or four years. Then there was the feeling that the Newspaper Guild was - people were beginning to realize that although there was some romance around the idea of organizing white collar workers, after all it was a small union. Jim Thimmes, his nose was out of joint a mile -

LG: The Steelworkers . . . .

Ward: Yes, he was the representative of the Steelworkers out here and he was feeling pretty sore about the whole thing; Connelly was persuaded to resign and put in Jim Thimmes.

LG: Because I recall . . . .

Ward: You played some role in that.

LG: Right, because the thing I was so determined to do - all of us were, really - at the founding convention was to try to get all the industrial unions represented on the executive board.

Thimmes was one; then there was (J.R.) Roberts, "Sen-sen Roberts" we used to call him, of the Rubber Workers; (James) Coulter of the Oil Workers. I remember the oil workers used to bend my ear that he was on the payroll of the companies. True or not true, I don't know. There were the Coulter brothers, key people in the Oil Workers.

We were determined to try to get them all represented without having it dominated by the left-wing unions or the newly formed unions. I spent a great deal of time on that. I thought that unless we could maintain that kind of unity, we'd be in trouble.

Some of the initial difficulties of the CIO began to surface at the Royal Palms convention For example, there was the International Ladies' Garment Workers; Jennie Matyas, for example, played anything but a constructive role. Actually they were trying to organize a mass walkout.

LG: This we got wind of - I forget in what way, but word got to us somehow; we had a lot of friends, naturally. If the Garment Workers could work things out their way, there would be a mass walk-out and a break-up of the convention even before it got started, so instead of having a genuine California State CIO, all we'd have would be just a fragment. A breakup would have been very damaging.

Ward: What did you do to prevent the walkout?

LG: We were just meeting every minute of the day and night with delegates from all the different unions, like Steel, which we considered important, Rubber was important, I remember spending a lot of time with Roberts. He was convinced to stay, finally. Jennie Matyas and the guy from the Amalgamated (Clothing Workers' Union), Jerry Posner . . . . He was a pretty decent guy; he didn't walk out.

But the Ladies Garment Workers Union just made a pain in the ass of themselves during the convention, Jennie Matyas being particularly difficult. She saw nothing wrong with walking up and taking the mike, whether it was her turn or not, and just start rattling off.

I recall one moment there - Harry was in the chair, presiding as West Coast Director of the CIO; she got up once too often, interrupting all proceedings without stating her name for the record. Harry lapsed into complete Australianese because he rapped the gavel and said, "Stayt your name and affiliyiation."

Ward: I also remember a crack of his when there was some question of a nomination of a candidate from the needle trades for the executive board and I think it was she who said, "Well, who could represent the needle trades better than the needle trades?" And Harry, from the chair: "I'll tell you who - anybody - can represent the needle trades better than the needle trades representative."

LG: On that score, they did not walk out. Apparently they didn't have time to organize a walkout; their support had been thoroughly dissipated.

It was a good convention, lot of spirit to it, lot of young delegates. We didn't realize that things were brewing back east. We weren't aware of it until it surfaced at the '38 CIO convention. I thought that Jenny Matyas and the Ladies' Garment Workers had their nose out of joint.

Ward: You mean on the west coast?

LG: Yes, but later on it was pretty obvious that Dubinsky (David Dubinsky, president of the ILGWU) was determined to walk out. As a matter of fact, by 1939 they were out.

Ward: I see. Then, you feel that Dubinsky had something to do with it?

LG: Oh, I'm sure of it, in retrospect; but at that moment I didn't know it. We were pretty naive, I suppose.

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IV TROUBLES AND TURBULENCE

(Interview 8: 4 April, 1979)##

Strikes, Fights and Progress

Ward: All right, Lou, now we go into other things that happened in 1938. How about the "hot box car"?

LG: Things were jumping even before 1938. Tensions between the ILWU and the Teamsters were pretty sharp. Dave Beck had achieved hegemony on the west coast. He had started his move to set up the Western Conference that later developed into a series of conferences established by the Brotherhood of Teamsters, such as the Western Conference, Central States Conference, Southern Conference and Eastern Conference.

That included the establishment of a Teamster local in warehouses for the first time, headed by a man named Ted White. There was also the continued march inland. That continued full scale.

There were some pretty sharp confrontations that occurred, like the strike against Cal Pack (California Packing Corporation) in Alameda. The warehousemen were locked out. The company made a move to run strikebreakers and break the union, which they pretty well managed to do. There was a large scale confrontation, pretty ugly and violent.

A large number of the Alameda police force, as I recall, were not civil servants really - they were on a sort of special hire basis. They quit after the whole thing. I remember that the neighbors,

LG: people living in the area around Cal-Pack, were sympathetic with the union. Ralph Dawson was in charge of that picket line and Ralph enjoyed drafting military plans of how we would handle these things.

One of our warehouse employers got his nose very badly out of joint because we borrowed some of his trucks without telling him what the purpose was, then used them to bring large groups of men over to Alameda. There you saw the courage and determination of guys like Bob Moore from the East Bay, Paul Heide, Chili.

I recall there was a temporary standoff and a few of us decided we'd walk up there and talk to these cops to see if we could re-establish a picket line, get the confrontation behind us; we were convinced there would be no problem. We left the pickets standing there - a large group - and walked up there, three or four of us.

When we got to them we realized how stupid we were, because here were a couple of these cops with shotguns and they were shaking; these are the kind of guys who pull the trigger under almost any circumstance. As we were talking to them, one of the cops kept swinging a billy at Bob Moore, who was a big man; it's a scene you would never forget. He'd catch the thing in the palm of his hand, put it back to the cop, keep on talking and catching it again. Nothing much happened; finally that picket line lost.

We never did manage to get Cal-Pack, although later on they shifted that operation, or part of the operation, to San Francisco. It was around that Del Monte (Corporation) or Cal-Pack warehouse where the blockade of the San Francisco waterfront started.

By 1938 the San Francisco Employers' Association had set up an affiliated group of warehouse employers and it got to be a pretty comprehensive organization. Their basic thrust was that a kind of unionism was moving in - uptown and away from the waterfront - that would result in endless disruption.

LG: Incidentally, some of the ads and editorials in the papers in those days are really worth reading to give you an idea of how people felt at that time. These employers were literally out of their minds.

Ward: They saw the revolution right around the corner?

LG: It was right there! Right! The whole program of trying to organize warehouse and other people was to get a death grip on the whole distribution structure; they had visions of the city being brought to its knees by the organization of warehousemen, together with the maritime workers. Obviously, that was the key industry for the city because the whole nature of San Francisco was one where it didn't have any real heavy industry to speak of.

Anyway, they formed themselves into an organization - I don't recall the exact title - but it included wholesalers, warehouse, distributors and so forth.

The union had been directing its organizational efforts so as to pick up various branches of warehouse such as public and cold storage - grocery, hardware warehouses, paper warehouses, drug, and dry goods; obviously, the attempt was always being made to try to bring all the warehousemen up to the level we had won in 1936.

In many cases this took an enormous jump because we organized people where the wage scale was less than 40 cents an hour. Moves of that sort were enormous; actually we negotiated contracts where the wage increase must have been almost as much again as the individual had been getting -

Ward: You mean double?

LG: Yes, double it. I recall particularly a place like Butler Brothers where we found people who were making $16 or $18 a week. We just about doubled that.

So the employers became convinced that what we were doing was whip-sawing the industry. A lot of that was actually true - no question about that.

LG: It was easy for the union to pick out one group and have it tied in with the general wage scales and conditions like public warehouse and cold storage, and then move on to the next group.

The employers came along with the idea that they wanted a single contract. On that score, people like Harry felt very strongly that a single master contract made a great deal of sense. Most of us in Warehouse pretty well agreed with it, although somewhat reluctantly, because the organizational bargaining technique of working one group off against the other was attractive.

We finally decided that we'd go along with the idea of a master contract, but not under circumstances where the differentials between the different parts of warehouse were frozen. In other words, nobody was going to give up anything in exchange for a master contract.

The Hot Boxcar

LG: We did recognize the fact that some groups would have to stand still for a little while until others caught up. Well, the employers brought their program to a head with the "hot boxcar". I think the hot boxcar originated with Woolworth's.

Ward: I was reading that this car was loaded with school supplies.

LG: Yes.

Ward: But it was sent to places - to warehouses - that had not the faintest connection with school supplies.

LG: It was sent to any kind of a warehouse which had a siding - a railroad siding. It moved around town - the hot boxcar. The railroad guys who were moving the car were very friendly, but after a demonstration they would have to take the locomotive and the car through, because of the laws governing their employment with the railroad company.

LG: As the boxcar reached the warehouse, our men would be given instructions to discharge the boxcar, which they always refused. Down would come the warehouse - locked out - and pretty soon a very substantial portion of the warehouses in town had been closed down.

Ward: No attempt was made to operate?

LG: No; it was a straight lockout. Your biggest difficulty with a lockout is that fundamentally it is an employer strike and about the best you can do is to get back to where you were. With a lockout there aren't specific gains in sight for the union; it is not built around union demands.

However, the thing began to jell, because of the amount of time that this '38 lockout was continuing, and also the amount of publicity it was getting. I recall Mike Quin* doing a piece for us; we printed it in the San Francisco Chronicle. That was about the hot box car . . . .

Ward: There was a song. It was a parody on a song called "A Tiskit, A Taskit" -

LG: Yes -"A Boxcar, A Boxcar"; right.

Ward: The girls used to put on shows at money raising affairs.

LG: Actually, we had good support on the thing. By that time - and Harry played an important role in this - policy finally got jelled. Well the hot boxcar dispute finally wound up with the basic agreement that there would be a master contract, although some of the elements of the master contract would be finally determined by arbitration. The arbitrator at the time was a man named Harry J. Rathbun.

The resolution of the hot boxcar came about by a combination of things; one was an editorial by Paul Smith, editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, saying that the kind of conflict that was going on around the hot boxcar was turning San Francisco into a ghost town; there had to be an end to this

* A CIO radio writer

LG: thing. Gene Paton had become president of ILWU Local 6 by then. He wrote a letter to the editor in which he took on Paul Smith, saying, "Look, if you know so much about this, we hereby notify you that we will be happy to accept your services as mediator." Well, Paul Smith didn't know what to do with this; obviously someone had called his hand. However, Paul Smith had a lot of gumption, and he did take on the job as mediator until the sessions got started. Sam Kagel (a prominent mediator-arbitrator) was in the picture; Gene Paton, of course.

The Master Contract

LG: By that time, I was with the State CIO; but we spent a lot of time on it. We didn't win everything we wanted, but fundamentally we did achieve the one thing that we were determined to get, a master contract which would preserve whatever gains we had made and perhaps provide for a period of catch-up time.

At least it would be the kind of contract that when you sat down to negotiate, you weren't negotiating industry by industry and maintaining differentials. The only differentials which might exist within the contract deal with job classifications or addenda - in terms of base rate, which was called the freight handler's rate, that we wanted to make sure was uniform; eventually that did come out of the master contract.

It was during the same period of time that Jim Blaisdell, who had been with one of the big law firms in town, became a wheel in this association. We began to deal with him; as an individual a very personable guy. I never had the feeling that he was anti-labor. No question that he organized his own people very effectively. We found out later, for example, that the employers during the hot boxcar dispute had set up something they called the "heat" committee.

Ward: Sounds like a goon squad to me.

LG: It was more effective. The "heat" committee's job was - I know this is true, because I got it directly from Jim later on - that in the cases of warehouses which were reluctant to go along with the hot boxcar lockout, they would get in touch with all the financial ties of those warehouses. Here was Company "G", that didn't want to go along with the lockout. They would find out very quickly that Company "G" had an outstanding loan from Bank of America for so much money.

Pretty soon Company "G" got a call from Bank of America, "Look, we're under the impression that your credit rating is extremely bad. This loan will have to be called and I doubt very much if you can get any future ones in view of your attitude." So, that was a "heat" committee. Talk about having leverage on an employer! That's power with a vengeance. So the employers learned the technique, in effect organizing their own union.

Ward: Did you get preference of hiring for all the houses?

LG: I don't think so, although there was some sort of a referral system set up for some houses that didn't have preference of employment as yet. But where we might not have had preference, we had this referral. By that time the momentum of the union was great enough that there was no problem in seeing to it that the referral system was tantamount to preference.

Ward: Would you explain the difference between referral and preference?

LG: Referral would simply mean that the union might send out a man who had experience in some particular industry and the employer would interview him to see whether or not he wanted him; still leaving the employer with the right to reject the man. But if you have enough steam on in a situation like this, nobody else can take the job except somebody out of the union hall; pretty soon that employer can get worn down just by referring the same man back, and back and back.

LG: I remember at the time we had a couple of black men in the union - as a matter of fact, some of us used to pitch in a couple of bucks to keep them going - because we were determined that there would be a breakthrough on this question in terms of blacks in the industry. And the technique we would use if there was a freight handler's job - which is still a large part of the industry - and no question that the man could handle it, was that we'd send the same man back to the same company day after day. Pretty soon the employer would get the point - that if he didn't hire this man, he wasn't going to get anybody.

Ward: But wait a minute - under the reference system couldn't he hire off the street?

LG: On that score, the employer realized pretty quickly he better not take the chance, because the guys in the house were backing the union. After the hot boxcar beef, even though the employers felt they had achieved something - and I guess they had - they did not come out unscathed.

They realized they were dealing with an outfit that wasn't about to dry up and blow away. The big bulk of the employers were not anxious to get into another confrontation, so that even loose language could be administered in such a way as to be a pretty effective practical thing.

It was during that time that Local 860 of the Teamsters announced that they had agreed basically to the employers' demand for a single contract. All they had was a handful of warehouses, primarily plumbing, and maybe one or two others. They carried a full page ad on responsibility on their part, warning us to get along with the employers, etc. etc.; a purely propaganda ad.

Years later when I went down to the Western Conference of Teamsters - many, many years later, when wounds had healed, in one of their conference rooms was a big, framed copy of this ad by the Teamsters Union. I'm sure the thing wasn't hung there deliberately so as to needle us, but the Teamsters were determined to prove themselves as being the goody-goody boys in relations with the employers.

Ward: Would you call it a "sweetheart" move?

LG: Not entirely; it couldn't be too much of a "sweetheart" move because if it was, then at that particular time the men would have deserted in droves. The Teamsters had to go along with some of the basic things that we picked up.

The main thing they gave the employers was, in effect, a free hand in the operation. I don't think they even fiddled around with things like steward systems; no attempt to get the membership to really enforce a contract, or to even stretch that contract a bit where necessary. One outfit was just a contract holder; the other outfit, namely, Local 6, was a genuine mass movement of the membership. That showed up time and time again.

When the Teamsters realized that continued attempts to try to put us out of business would not work, one of them used the expression, "Look, you guys are different; you can blow a whistle and the whole damn membership is right there." Of course, to them that's a highly admirable thing to have that kind of discipline.

What they did not think through was that even though his description might be accurate, it wasn't because anybody was carrying a club. If you blew that whistle they knew you meant it, and they happened to be in support of what you were talking about.

The theory behind the master contract is sound. However, there's no question in my mind that even to this day, if you were to single-shot warehouses some of them could be knocked over for more money than others.

For example, one of the groups that has sort of drifted off, was not part of the master contract, is in grocery; the reason is quite obvious. There the warehousing is only a very small part of an enormous chain such as Safeway or Lucky Stores. Those rates can be boosted quite a bit; in terms of the percentage of the total marketing cost, it is not that much. It's like paying one machinist in a warehouse of 200 people a higher wage; if you

LG: put it in relationship to all the workers, it doesn't amount to a hell of a lot.

So, grocery is an example of where, for one reason or another, they were determined to get out from under Local 6. Like at one time, for example, Safeway had a big installation in San Francisco . . . .

Ward: Bill Ingram's plan working out?

LG: It worked out in the sense that all of the small grocery warehouses, unless they had a specialized commodity like Italian olive oil, were put out of business. All you have left now are the bigger ones. Even an outfit like Purity Warehouse - Purity Stores, that was a big grocery outfit - that's folded by now; you have United Grocers which still goes on. Associated Grocers, I think, has folded too.

Those characters, in order to get out of the agreement they had with us had a little operation in San Jose called United Grocers Cash and Carry; that's a place where a guy in a truck picks up some things wholesale and takes them away himself. When they opened up in Richmond, where they are located now, they used that contract to sign an agreement with the Teamsters in their Richmond Warehouse as United Grocers. Then they doubled back and folded up the Mutual plant in San Francisco.

They used the device there of having had an agreement with the Teamsters. When Safeway folded their San Francisco warehouse, they had already set up a warehouse in Richmond; there again they worked up an understanding with the Teamsters' Union.

There is a humorous sidelight when the present Association was still the Distributors' Association the employer group negotiated the master contract and administered it; the man who became head of the Association, J. Hart Clinton, was anxious to have the master contract rates apply to grocery. He was practically tearing his hair on what was happening to United Grocers, which he still represented even

LG: though they were not part of our master contract; they were in the Teamsters. Apparently the Teamsters were really giving them the business. He wanted to know whether we could do anything, because our relations - this was later on - with the Teamsters had improved somewhat. I said, "Well, if we were to get mixed up at all in this thing, to tell you the truth, I'd be sitting down with some of those Teamsters figuring out what additional demands could they make on that house, other than what they have done so far."

I said, "The United Grocers are the guys who jumped the fence. They decided to get out from under the tent, used their own devices; they thought they were cutting a fat hog in the ass by getting rid of Local 6; I gather they are paying a bit of a price now." He said, "That's right, that's right." I said, "If I could think of anything that would help the Teamsters give that company a bad time, I'd be right over there at once." There's no use trying to salvage somebody like that. When they have done it, they've done it.

By that time the Teamsters were trying to organize all the warehousemen they could; not just Local 860. On the Oakland side of the bay, they set up Local 853. In Richmond, their Teamster local became a general local, including warehousemen in Local 315. On the Peninsula there was a local headed by a man named Joe Dillon.

Ward: Oh, yes - he used to be with Local 6?

LG: Right, although one thing about Joe, at least he was frank and open when he left Local 6 to go to work for the Teamsters. He sat down with Harry and myself and said, "Look, I'm leaving Local 6 and it's not because I don't agree with the union or what it's done." As a matter of fact I had known Joe Dillon when we worked at Owens-Illinois Glass together, back in 1935.

He said, "I just can't raise my family on the kind of money this union is paying, so I'm going to work for the Teamsters; I don't intend to fight the ILWU. They've given me a charter down the Peninsula, Local 655.

LG: He was in charge of that until the day he died, although there were some odd periods many, many years later where I found myself going down to his local at a membership meeting to help explain a new master contract which we had negotiated jointly and where some good rank and filers got hold of me after the meeting and said, "What the hell are you doing down here? We figured we'd get him on this one." (laughter)

Ward: You were protecting Joe?

LG: Oh, this was quite a few years later. All I'm trying to say is that the Teamsters were actually moving in many ways.

As some of them would tell us later, "You know that we used to call your office every once in a while and pretend that we worked at a certain place and have you guys go down there and put out a leaflet, because as soon as you put out a leaflet we could go in to the employer and say, "You don't want them." They were using us as a cat's paw to organize; more than a cat's paw, as a bogey-man.

It cost the employers something; at least the guys got organized. They might have done better, of course, in Local 6, but one thing that did happen during that period was that in a couple of places, like the case of 860 in San Francisco, they paid their warehousemen or freight handlers the base rate, plus one penny more than the Local 6 agreement.

In the case of Oakland, they paid them 3 pennies more than the base rate. Incidentally, everybody called that "the red penny"; that was the penny that was being paid; these guys under no circumstances had any red thinking or red underwear.

So, years later when we had gone into joint negotiations, Teamster warehousemen and the ILWU, which still continue to this day, there was an attempt at one time by the employers to equalize rates. When they finally granted our demands, they were substantial demands; we came out very well; and they said the least that ought to be done would be to get rid of this differential the Teamsters had.

Ward: Was that your position, too?

LG: Hell, no - because we said, "Look, you guys paid for that and you're going to pay for it from now on. We're going to keep the red penny in the contract."

Ward: Yeah, but your workers were paying for it too?

LG: No - they were paying for it during the time the employers were able to use the Teamster contracts to ride our back and drag their feet. The Teamsters went from those days of organization at least 20 years or thereabouts without ever having a strike. Local 6 was doing the fighting; they would either drag their feet or sign "me too" contracts. That in effect was what the employers were paying the one penny for.

The warehouses organized by the Teamsters would operate under any circumstances, and just a sort of general understanding that they would wait and see; once Local 6 finished its contracts, they'd go back and pick up the same gains. That didn't do us a hell of a lot of good, of course, and was one of the reasons why years later we felt it was so important to try to put together joint negotiations; then instead of the ILWU warehousemen carrying the load for everybody, they'd all be in there pulling on the oars in the same direction . .

Ward: But you still wanted to preserve the differential?

LG: We did, but the employers wanted to get rid of it because they figured okay we're not getting anything more for it. You finally get to the point where in negotiating jointly you coordinate your demands, they get to be joint demands and finally, if you take a strike vote, you take a joint strike vote.

We even had an understanding whereby the joint strike vote is pooled as to whether or not it authorizes taking strike action, and actually the ratification is pooled. When you have done that, what the employers have paid for with the red penny is obviously of no value.

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Ward: All right, where were we in the discussion?

LG: The red penny -

Ward: Oh, yes, the red penny.

LG: Our position was: "Look, you paid for it. Now, at this particular moment, you figure you are not getting value received. You made a deal and we are going to hold you to it." Bear in mind that by that time the penny did not make that much difference. When you were talking about 62½ cents an hour or 75 cents an hour, a penny looked like something, but by the time you're talking about $5.50 or $6.00 an hour, a penny doesn't look like anything.

So we deliberately kept it in the contract; of course the Teamsters wanted to keep it in the contract because their members would say, "Look, we're not getting the full wage increase you're talking about."

Ward: In other words, the employers wanted to reduce the Teamsters down to Local 6 -

LG: Yes, because they were no longer getting something they paid for.

Ward: But couldn't you have fought back and said, "Well, let's raise the ILWU rate to the Teamster rate"?

LG: Oh, yeah, that would have been one of our arguments but we're not going to make that a strike issue because how in the devil can you get a joint strike where all we're striking for, and all we're asking the Teamsters to strike for, is for us to get a little bit more which they are already getting?

Ward: I see.

LG: In other words, when you have joint demands and joint strike action, there must be all the things that have common denominators; otherwise you'll be in trouble. Plus the fact that I saw nothing wrong with it.

Ward: Did you have any argument in your negotiating committee on that score?

LG: Oh, we'd get arguments once in a while among our own people; but obviously with the Teamsters, they weren't going to raise an argument because they were getting a penny more.

Problems About War-like Japan

Ward: Now, we've been going along here in an almost exclusively masculine paradise. Did you ever hear the phrase, "The stigma of silk?"

LG: Oh, only during the boycott of Japanese goods -

Ward: Didn't that start in 1938?

LG: Now, you're talking about another field - it was in 1938 and I believe went into 1939.

Ward: Yes, it was in 1939 definitely but I think it started in 1938 -

LG: That was when there were a whole series of tie-ups up and down the west coast against the shipment of scrap iron to Japan. A lot of it originated in San Francisco when they tore up some of the Market Street railway lines. Part of the whole movement of scrap iron to Japan came with the tearing up of these rails. That was very good scrap for the making of steel; it's probably the finest scrap that anybody could find because it is already finely tempered.

It was during that same period when the Japanese were invading China. I think that must have been shortly after the incident of the Marco Polo Bridge where the Japanese moved in claiming that something or other had happened. It was after the Japanese had taken Manchuria and set up their puppet dictator, (Henry) Pu Yi. Then they extended their control in '37, '38, '39 when the Japanese launched their program, the Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

LG: Anyway, these beefs against the Japanese invasion of China were going on full blast, and there was one tie-up after another on the loading of scrap iron to Japan. As a matter of fact our relations with the Chinese community in San Francisco got to be very close and warm. We'd have little informal discussions with some of the Chinese in one of the restaurants; and they were very fine hosts.

I'll never forget one incident that occurred where we walked into one of the restaurants that was up a flight of stairs; they had taken over the banquet room, a small one, and they asked if some of the guys would like to have a drink - Paton, myself. At that time the Chinese had not really gotten into the bar business like they are today. Pat and I asked for Scotch and soda, which we were drinking at the time. I guess they thought that soda was cider; we were served a pair of Scotch and ciders; it was just horrible, just horrible.

Ward: And you had to drink it?

LG: We drank most of it and then figured out an excuse to wander back there where they were mixing the drinks and finally got the guys straightened out. Next time it was Scotch and plain water, if you don't have soda. But as far as they were concerned, Scotch and soda and Scotch and cider, the same thing. They were very pleasant hosts.

There was one get-together where Pat had quite a few and they had one of the Chinese take him to a cab, take him home and come back again. They were very solicitous. At the same time we discussed with them loading plans that were going on about scrap iron; we had an idea what ships were taking it.

They would make arrangements for people from Chinatown to come down and picket that ship, and our guys would then observe the picket line. None of these picket lines could last very long because sooner or later the arbitrator came along and said that this was not an economic picket line, that it did not involve workers on the job; that this was a demonstration picket line and was therefore illegal under the contract.

LG: I don't know how many of those arbitration decisions came down, but they must be longer than your arm. I recall in one place the arbitrator was a rabbi by the name of Jake Weinstein. Jake Weinstein was a very progressive rabbi, a very good man. I got the impression that he was considered a little too far out for the congregation that he had in Portland and as a result he left there and came down to San Francisco. He was making a herculean effort to try to establish that the picket line was legitimate. (laughter)

Ward: Even you couldn't do that.

LG: No, we couldn't do it. Finally somebody got the word and said, "Look, it won't do any harm - the demonstration is over with." These things got enormous attention. They used to have a sort of annual festival in Chinatown built around supporting China. The feeling in a place like San Francisco was very warm toward the Chinese - very hostile to Japanese aggression.

During that time Harry got some wire from the State Department asking why we couldn't just stick to our business of being a union and to keep our nose out of foreign affairs. That was ignored. During the same period it got to the point where the women who supported the boycott of Japanese goods and were opposed to the invasion of China took to wearing cotton stockings instead of silk stockings; they looked terrible.

Ward: Lisle stockings.

LG: Just a little higher grade of cotton, as far as I know, but that was during that silk stocking period -

Ward: Well, what was the alternative if you couldn't wear silk stockings? There was no nylon then.

LG: Oh, no! We're talking about the thirties - nylon came along later.

Ward: So, you could tell right away whether a girl was a progressive or union or what; if she had pretty legs there was something wrong with her.

LG: By that time few of them, if any, had gotten around to going bare-legged or wearing trousers.

There was a period there in Warehouse where we had a woman business agent. We had a good number of women in the union - places like Hiram Walker, Southend Warehouse, Lipton's Tea, Colgate-Palmolive, Clorox, Best Foods; at least 20-25% of the total local.

Sure, you had some warehouses with no women, but a place like Hills Brothers would have some women in the packing line; Folger Coffee Company would, Lipton's Tea - they had a large operation, particularly making these tea bags - employed a large number of women. We had a lot of women stewards, still do, in the local.

Right now Local 6 has a very competent woman business agent over in Oakland - that's Evelyn Johnson, a black woman who does one hell of a job. At that time there weren't that many black women in the local, as there were not many blacks. When you went out to organize you rarely came across a plant that had any blacks. The blacks came in by way of the hiring hall. The whole question of racial hiring broke down and the employers began to hire them on their own.

I'm trying to recall what the year was when we put together the town hall meeting. There was a "committee of 40" of employers, set up for the purpose of coordinating employer bargaining and taking a very tough position on the issues of the day. It was headed by a man named (W.P.) Fuller. Do you remember Fuller Paints?

Ward: It's still Fuller Paints.

LG: I don't know if it's still around. Of course, the old man is not around. I know his son quite well - Palmer Fuller; he's on the board of the Exploratorium (a science exhibit in San Francisco). I know his present wife - Esther Pike; she was formerly married to Bishop (James) Pike.

The San Francisco News was still publishing in those days - that was Scripps Howard (a publishing chain). They insisted they were not anti-union,

LG: just wanted certain ground rules of bargaining; San Francisco was getting to be "a real ghost town." The whole thing was being built up during this period and I went up to him one day and said, "Look, if what you say is correct, you shouldn't have any objection to a town hall meeting."

Ward: You're talking to Fuller now?

LG: Yes. "A town hall meeting where you can put your position out before the people and we'll put ours out before the people." We arranged a town hall meeting at the Civic Auditorium and it was packed. The thing caught on. As a matter of fact, I recall a headline in the San Francisco News - "Town Hall Meeting Tonight" - that was the banner. It was an interesting session; I'm not saying a great deal got accomplished.

Ward: Was Lapham (shipowner Roger Lapham) the guest?

LG: Lapham against Bridges and I was bucking heads with Fuller. Lapham blew the show when he got up. The hiring hall was still a hot issue because it took away their grip over the men. When Lapham made the statement saying, "We're not opposed to the hiring hall - we just want to control hiring," that was the end of the line; nobody missed it, and everybody just roared.

Lapham, until then, was getting quite a good reception, because he was a very personable guy. He looked like a shipowner; big, grey-haired, heavy-set; actually a rather pleasant egg - a lot of guts. After the 1936 strike, I had gone back to work in the car gang - the same car gang. We were at American Hawaiian; that was it - because Lapham was head of American Hawaiian.

Somebody came along - it was around quarter to twelve - and said, "Knock off, fellows." And that's all anybody had to say; we assumed it was a stoppage over some issue or other. We started walking out and somebody says, "Look, we're all supposed to gather there at this loading platform"; and so we stopped. After all, it's on the employer's time and it was a lunch break. And here is Roger Lapham. He was wearing a battered hat and

LG: an old raincoat - it was drizzling that day. He had asked for the meeting with all the guys on the dock, simply to tell them, "The strike is behind us - as to who won or who lost, it's not important. I'm just happy to see that the strike is over and as far as we're concerned, we have a job to do and we want to get along." There was an interesting reaction on the part of a number of guys; they turned around and said, "That old son-of-a-bitch ain't so bad, you know."

Ward: Did you ever hear the story of Roger Lapham's little evening at the P. U. (Pacific Union) Club?

LG: No.

Ward: Where somebody said the room they were doing their drinking in wasn't big enough to swing a dead cat around in; by god he went out, found a dead cat, came back and tried to prove the room was big enough.

LG: That sounds like him; in later years our relations with him were fairly good (after he became mayor of San Francisco).

Ward: Yes, I remember that he and his wife came and danced at the Warehouse ball.

LG: He came to the Warehouse dance - I remember that. Yeah, that dance was at the Civic Auditorium. We used to have these big shindigs - that and the Christmas party we used to have there for the kids. We're wandering a little bit here, but it gives a sort of the flavor of the '38 period.

The Crockett Struggle

LG: On the other hand, in certain other areas the battle was almost unrelenting. It was in 1938, towards the fall, when we had the major confrontation in Crockett; they tried to break the Warehouse local there.

LG: It had been established in 1935 after a rough go with that company (California and Hawaiian Sugar Company); the guys struck after losing an NLRB election in which the employers were practically looking over their shoulders and telling them how to vote. Well, in 1938 there was a big head of steam up in the refinery because they had been herded into a federal local; you remember federal locals?

Ward: Yes.

LG: These were sort of direct chartered locals by the A F of L. I forget the number. There the company had even herded in the secretarial staff and people who were in semi-executive positions who were also leaders of the local.

As far as we were concerned, it was just an out-and-out company union. And a number of the guys, good guys, I remember - one was named (Allen) Engle, another was (Carl) Schneider - I don't know if they are still around - wanted to take the lead in the formation of a CIO organization up there. We got a charter for them; I think it was called Local 776 of the CIO. They began organizing; one day the company fired them.

A strike over their discharge wouldn't work out too well, because again you are running into the same principles of a lockout. The best you can do is to get back even. In that case it's the jobs of two men against pulling out several hundred. The warehouse contract was open at the same time around September or thereabouts. I remember missing the ILWU convention, which took place in Aberdeen (Washington) that year.

Ward: And you missed it on account of Crockett?

LG: Right. The Crockett beef turned out to be a major confrontation between the ILWU and the Teamsters. They had mustered part of the A F of L to support their beef.

Ward: This company union?

LG: Yes - their objective was to get rid of us entirely; no question that they were being assisted and helped by the company. That got to be a pretty tense beef because they brought in a number of heavy-handed guys. I forget the name of the A F of L representative in charge - it was something like Watkins -

Ward: It wasn't Pedro Pete?

LG: No - no, I think the only time I saw him (Watkins) was when he lifted the charter of the Contra Costa Labor Council when I walked in. Well, he was a big fellow -

Ward: Watkins?

LG: I think so. They ran off our picket line. I remember getting a call from Crockett headquarters of the union; they were upstairs above a bar. The vigilantes had run them off the picket line entirely, screaming that they were going to run them out of town. Well, we decided we better go up there and re-establish the picket line. I got a lot of help from the warehousemen and longshoremen, guys like Swede Carlson, Pat O'Hanigan, Red O'Leary (longshoremen); these guys were pretty good with their dukes -

Ward: O'Hanigan beat up Henry Schmidt (former president of Longshore Local 10) one time -

LG: Right. Red O'Leary is the guy who kicked the hell out of this Russian, who went home and got a gun and killed him. The guy's name was Korshin - that was years later. Red and those guys were pretty good guys. Well, anyway, we gathered these guys up in whatever cars we had, all piled in together. Some of them even walked through that Selby tunnel (a railroad tunnel) to get to Crockett.

Ward: How many did you have?

LG: Oh, I'd say, around 250. Yeah.

Ward: All in private cars?

LG: Just about - there was no other form of transportation. If you wanted to go to Port Costa, you went from Crockett over the hump and then to Port Costa, which had legends all of its own. That's where guys like (Daniel) Divvil Mahoney hung out. He had been a friend of Jack London's. Jack used to hang out at Port Costa with the dock wallopers.

Divvil Mahoney had a couple of sons, one of whom is still in the warehouse local or about to retire. That's Dan Mahoney. Another son was in the clerks' union. He's been retired now for some time. Divvil was a character all by himself. He felt that C & H owed him a living.

Ward: C & H would be the sugar refinery?

LG: Crockett; he thought nothing of helping himself to whatever sugar he needed. Somebody gave orders that Divvil Mahoney was not to be allowed near the plant. He found himself a way in there and got himself a 100 pound sack of sugar, walked up to the office with the 100 pound sack of sugar on his back, slammed it down on the desk saying, "Never you tell me that Divvil Mahoney can't have sugar when he wants it."

Ward: What was that first name?

LG: Divvil - that's just the Irish name for devil. His best days must have been during prohibition where he ran a still - he used to poach. When PG&E (Pacific Gas and Electric Company) came through there with electricity, he figured out a way to tap the wire. Ran a bit of a bar in Port Costa; had a circle of friends there, sort of the unofficial mayor of the town; he was an amazing old guy. It's just sad that we never got a chronicle of this man - there's mostly legends about him.

During the '38 beef, Dave Beck had some heavy-handed guys moving up and down the coast. There was a lot of violence in the air. It wasn't an easy situation; some of them came out to Port Costa.

Somebody told them to talk to Divvil Mahoney,

LG: because he had a lot of influence; so they came over there and talked to Mahoney about whether he would lend a hand taking over the Warehouse local for the A F of L. He says, "Well, I want to think it over; come back this afternoon." They came back that afternoon and here was Divvil and about three or four of his friends with shotguns and he said, "You got your answer." (laughter)

Ward: Okay, let's go back to the strike.

LG: The sheriff of the town was called "Honest John" Miller. I think he had shaken down every businessman and bar in all Contra Costa County. That's "Honest John" Miller. And we get to the entrance of Crockett and he's there with some police cars and a couple of state cars and he says, "Nope, you can't go in there. If you go in there, there's going to be a riot."

Ward: You were with them?

LG: Yes, I was with them; I was in charge. So, I said, "We're not going in there to start a riot. All we want to do is to re-establish a peaceful picket line in front of the plant. We've been run off. Our men are holed up. There's about 200-250 of our guys holed up in our office and fearful of leaving because they'll be beaten up by the vigilantes. So we want to set up the picket line."

He says, "Well, I don't think there are any outsiders in town anyway - there are no outsiders in town. If you can prove that to us . . . ." We knew that there were outsiders in town, so he said, "Well, I'll go back and find out." "No," I said, "We'll go back with you." I guess he didn't like the looks of our guys.

Anyway, I left word that: "If we're not back in 45 minutes, you guys just come on in; period." So, we go into town. Sure enough here are all kinds of characters in town that you could tell in a second were some of the vigilantes; primarily among the supervisors and foremen and so forth. They formed a big ring around us and the sheriff was trying to maintain friendly relations.

LG: There was just one group of our guys who went in; I think Swede Carlson was in there, O'Hanigan, Red O'Leary, somebody else was along; so I spot this same A F of L representative, and say, "I know this guy is an outsider - he doesn't live here in Crockett, he doesn't work at the plant." This guy starts bellowing, making a lot of noise.

Oh, it was one of our guys, I think it was either Pat O'Hanigan or Red O'Leary said, "Look, these guys are carrying clubs, and you're telling us there's no problem here in town. That's the reason our guys are holed up." So, as the sheriff walked over to see whether one guy had a club, apparently some of the other guys felt they were going to be shaken down. All of a sudden they dropped them and stepped back. Here's a whole pile of clubs.

We told the sheriff, "Our guys are coming into town - we're not going to tolerate this." We got back just before the 45 minutes had run out and we said, "Come on, fellows, let's go, it's all right with the sheriff." Our guys came into town and the fellows we had in Crockett who were holed up decided to come out.

Our guys in the office had improvised a series of battering rams; it was a steep flight of stairs up to the office. They had gotten something like a saw horse and they had mounted two-by-sixes or two-by-eights on top that the vigilantes would have had to break through to get into the office. These things would have come flying downstairs.

So we said, "We're going to put back the picket line." That was our objective. There was a tense moment when the guys all gathered outside and I announced, "We are going to march four abreast in front of the company and we are going to lock arms just to make sure that under no circumstances could anybody say that one of our guys threw the first blow."

I asked Dan Mahoney and Austy Reagan to go back up into the office and bring down the union banner and the American flag. Mahoney tells the story later - "We get up there and I told Austy, 'You take the American flag - I know you're more patriotic!'"

LG: So, we formed our line and started marching. It was a very tense moment as we got to the main entrance. A lot of these vigilantes had gathered and as we got there you weren't sure what was going to happen. We moved and they decided they better not start anything. We kept marching around for a while and before long some of our guys started wandering around town.

Some of the families had been frightened sick - were afraid to leave their homes. But we re-established the picket line. What happened after that was quite humorous. This character from the A F of L was giving everybody an awful lot of lip; he was saying, "What are you going to do about all the guys we have here?" I said, "We're going to re-establish a picket line, that's all." He said, "Well, I'm not sure we will stand for that."

I said, "If you want to settle something that way, though it doesn't make any sense, you got around 250 guys at least, and we've got around 250. There's a ball park over there; we'll send them all in there and see who comes out. All right?" He decided he didn't want that either; our guys had fire in their eyes. They were pretty angry.

Anyway, after we re-established the picket line somebody made a big decision to see this fight through; they announced a general strike of the building trades. They were going to shut down everything and gather in Crockett. Two or three days later this announcement came out in the press. I was up in Crockett.

We were sitting around discussing this and what the devil we'd do; once again the guys were fearful, and legitimately so, that an attempt would be made to run us off the picket line and break the union. After figuring out the whole thing as best we could - Larry Resner (reporter) was up there; he worked for the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Chronicle at that period has some interesting stories on the while thing - we finally decided we'd issue a public statement, saying that inasmuch as the A F of L had announced they were taking a public holiday to gather in Crockett, we thought we ought to take a holiday, too; we've

LG: asked our men to go fishing; we would just have a token picket line up there.

We took four old-timers; they manned the picket line. The fascinating thing that happened - I don't know how many men they actually got into Crockett that day; maybe a thousand men, maybe a few more - they marched through these absolutely empty streets. We just had four pickets standing there. It became a laughing matter. There were no incidents.

Oh, there was one incident at the end of the parade where there was a guy in the warehouse who had been an ex-fighter and he had a tendency to get a bit punchy. He had a few drinks and their parade wound up with some of the heavy guys and he went down to the bar to have a couple of drinks. He walked out and saw them and said, "Why don't you get your ass out of town?" And pretty soon he and this guy tangled. He did all right - (laughter)

There were some other incidents during this strike that I recall; we had a small soup kitchen set up for the pickets where they could get coffee and doughnuts and things of that sort. It was up a block from the plant itself and then down a bit of a slope. I went down there one night - 1:30 or 2:00 o'clock in the morning and the only person there was Mama Zuber.

Mama Zuber was one of the most amazingly loyal people - she had the greatest love for our union. Joe Zuber worked in Crockett; later on he stayed with the union and worked somewhere in Oakland. Joe Zuber was a Montenegran - they both were - and he stood as straight as an arrow, about six foot tall, strong man; very quiet, though. I'm sitting around there talking to Mama Zuber and said, "We still have a lot of these vigilantes running around town; why are you here by yourself? You might be having nothing but trouble." She said, "No, after all Joe and I fought together against the Turks." (laughter) This must have been around 1914.

Ward: Oh, in Montenegro -

LG: Sure, in Montenegro. She walks over to the kitchen drawer, pulls it open and there's a Luger. She says, "You know, Montenegrans are afraid of God, not of men." (laughter)

We finally wound up the strike all right - we got a contract. We took Schneider and Engle, and there might have been some others, into Warehouse Local 6. We couldn't get them back into the plant. Local 776, this CIO Union we tried to form, never did get much further.

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Ward: Now, you have the two guys - got jobs for them -

LG: In the warehouse, in the city of Crockett; they worked out their days there.

Not only did the ILWU union survive in Crockett; over the years it literally set the pace for all negotiations, everything in the contract, with the big majority of the workers in the plant belonging to the Federal local and just tailing along. It even got to the point a year or so ago where the wages for warehousemen were higher than the journeyman's rate in the plant, because of the persistence of the ILWU.

Ward: You mean you actually still have two outfits up there?

LG: Yes, although relations now are much better. The man who is the secretary-treasurer of the refinery local has turned out to be a good union man, very friendly to the ILWU. As a matter of fact, years later we even had joint negotiations.

Ward: Well, what does the refinery local's membership consist of?

LG: Oh, I'd say about a thousand.

Ward: How many workers in the warehouse?

LG: At that time there were about 400.

Ward: I see, the tail wagging the dog.

LG: Yes, and now the warehouse, which is highly mechanized - you don't have any more bagged raw sugar or things of that sort - is much smaller; must be about 175 - 180 men. The union has done a pretty good job in terms of protecting our men. The pension plan there is fairly good. We've made general progress; the big beef has been that they wanted the bay area scale; the result of getting that kept moving us constantly ahead of the A F of L local.

As a matter of fact the A F of L local went on strike two or three times in the last seven or eight years in an attempt to catch up; most of them finally concluding they never could.

At the time of the last contract, after they negotiated their contract and the ILWU finished its contract, the employers granted an additional 50 cents an hour to the journeymen, partially because they were afraid of losing them. Some of these journeymen, even though they had years of service at C & H, were shopping around for jobs at this new brewery that's opened in Benecia.

Ward: I should think they would have been shopping around for a job in the warehouse.

LG: Not quite; no, because a journeyman thinks differently.

One of the other incidents that occurred during this Crockett thing; tensions were very high all during this period. Damn near took on the framework of a civil war. If somebody was a vigilante our guys would never forget it to their dying day. A guy like "Ham and Eggs" - Hemenez - his memory on these things is like an elephant's. He forgets nothing.

I was up there just about every day and usually quite late into the night. One evening I was leaving the Warehouse hall and a whole gang of women had gathered; these were the wives of some of the foremen and vigilantes. They were screaming at me about "outsiders," and I ought to get the hell

LG: out of town; get this whole, goddam warehouse local out of town.

Here they were, embarked on purely fraticidal strife; no way out except the other guy has to get killed. The sheriff was around. Apparently some of these gals had decided on their own crazy plan that they were going to grab hold of me; they had a blanket that they were going to cover my head with, and then they were going to tar and feather me. Some of them began to get pretty violent; one of them got hold of the lapel of my jacket and tore it.

Let me tell you, being attacked by a group of women is not easy to handle - it's almost impossible. I spotted the sheriff standing there right on the outskirts of the scrap and not doing a damn thing. I finally said, "Look, Sheriff, I've got to talk to you," and I pushed my way through.

Years later, when I retired, the guys in Crockett put on a dinner for me; many of the old-timers were still there, and it was an interesting affair because the men had decided they would do all the cooking - not the women. One of them who had been an ex-baker put together a marvelous cake.

They charged something like $15 bucks apiece, including all you could drink. Some guys must have had their 15 dollars worth in the first hour. Anyway, it was a real pleasant affair, very friendly, very warm. Their cooking was good, although I understand that the beef inside the kitchen as to who was the best cook went on through all the preparations. They spent most of the day at this. They had a present for me, a barometer, and they presented me with a check. Dick Boyer, who is an old-timer, had been around there in '38 during this beef and he said, "You know, it's been a lot of years since we've owed you a new suit. Maybe this will cover it." I stayed very close to the union up there over the years and continued to help negotiate contracts or handle the strikes.

It was in 1938 that I went back to the first CIO convention in Pittsburgh. That was the first and only time that I met Heywood Broun (famous newspaper columnist and first president of the American Newspaper Guild). Broun greatly enjoyed

LG: his drinking and the company of everybody around him and was a marvelous racounteur.

They had a men's bar in the William Penn Hotel. A number of us gathered there and I was lucky enough to be along. Everybody was exchanging stories; these were halcyon years for the CIO.

The description of Heywood Broun as "an unmade bed" is very accurate. He had this huge hat and when he sat down to drink he took his hat off and put it on his lap. Pretty soon you began to realize that everything at this table was ending up in Heywood Broun's hat including his money; if somebody would tell a story, he might make a note; this might supply him with something for a column. He had this faculty - an amazing one; if he could not write a column in 20 minutes it was no good and he'd tear it up and start all over again. So, here were the notes going in his hat; everything going in his hat.

Every once in a while his wife, Connie, would stick her head in. He'd told one of the waiters there that under no circumstances did he want any women in the bar. The waiter would rush over and say, "Sorry, this is a men's bar." She was getting pretty irritated with him. But it was a good convention.

Ward: The founding convention of the CIO. Before that it was the Committee for Industrial Organization?

LG: Before then it was called the Committee for Industrial Organization. It was as a Committee for Industrial Organization that many of us put up this fight that went on in the labor councils because we said, "This is not a dual union - it's a committee for the purpose of organizing industrially the major industries like steel, auto, glass, textile, rubber."

It became obvious that the Committee really had no choice at that stage but to form itself into an industrial organization. That was the founding convention; it became, instead of the Committee for Industrial Organization, the Congress of Industrial Organizations - the CIO.

(Interview 9: 11 April, 1978)

LG: There are a couple of small items on Crockett which might be of interest. We decided that the only way to avoid a straight lockout on the terms of the A F of L, namely, that the warehouse be surrendered to the A F of L, would be to go on strike on our own demands, which were open at the time.

The background of Crockett is one all of its own and would take a lot of study. Over the years company policy had been that there were different national groups that were hired in; in most cases they came from backgrounds where they didn't readily communicate with each other. There were just plain garden variety Americans; then they hired a substantial number of Italians - some 40 percent must have been Italians. Then there were some Spaniards who were hired, like Hemenez - his father was a Spaniard, I think an Asturian. Then the company brought in a number of Portuguese.

During that 1938 beef up there I was inducted into the Portuguese Club. One of the very active members we had up there, Clarence Rose, a man we used to call "Horse-power" - strong man and a very powerful union guy - came to me one day and said, "Lou, we've been keeping an eye on you; we decided you are eligible for membership in the Portuguese Club; that's a great honor, because we know you're not Portuguese." I said, "Many thanks."

He said, "We're having the swearing-in ceremony tonight and we'd like to have you make it." I said, "Well, okay, we have no meeting that night." I had been up there most of the day, so I went over to the Portuguese Club; not many there, perhaps 20 - 25. Clarence Rose was chairman, and a small wooden box was set up before him. The so-called swearing-in ceremonies, I think, were a complete fabrication in Portuguese with an adequate amount of Portuguese wine being circulated.

Finally, Clarence announced: "Okay, now you are about to take the oath. You've got to place your hand on this box and repeat after me . . . ."

LG: I put my hand on the box - there was a spring there - and out jumped a monumental horse cock that somebody had picked up in Butchertown years before and shellacked. That was their swearing in ceremony. It was a nice evening.

But in view of this whole background of hiring and all these different national frictions, it was understandable when some of the old-timers said, "You know, we never went down to San Francisco to see the fights; you just hang around on Saturday nights right here in Crockett." A lot of it was guys letting off steam and the national frictions some companies will try to develop.

The evening we took that strike vote to go out one of the Portuguese got up and said, "I want to say something in Portuguese, by gosh." And that was to support the strike vote and to vote "yes"; so he says it; and then somebody else jumps up and says, "Look, I've got the right to say it in Italian." Same thing in Italian.

Pretty soon, they're going through all the nationalities - a Spaniard gets up, says his piece in Spanish. One guy gets up and says, "Who's going to talk Russian?" And the chairman says, "I guess you better do that - nobody else can talk Russian." So, he spoke in Russian, urging that they vote "yes". It was an odd and interesting sidelight; it represented that nationalities were being forgotten, and that the members were sticking together as a single group.

Ward: The nationalities were being put to a better use than the company imagined.

LG: I told you how we marched those longshoremen and warehousemen into town when "Honest John" Miller, the sheriff, finally had to concede that there were all kinds of outsiders in town. Most of them were armed with billy clubs that had been made in the company's carpenter shop . . .

Ward: That's a new one, you didn't tell that before.

LG: And when we finally got into town the first thing we did was go over to the Warehouse hall and make it possible for the guys to leave who had been holed up there overnight. We gathered there determined to re-establish a picket line.

I got on top of a car to announce how we would form our picket line, namely, four abreast, which was exactly the width of the sidewalk there, and that we would lock arms and under no circumstances would any of us strike the first blow. There was this brief confrontation, but our men took over the picket line, circled around the entrance several times and sort of got things back in order where they belonged. "Honest John" Miller was standing on the fringes all the time and he turned to me and said, "You know, you must be crazy." And I said, "Why?" "You damn fool, standing there on top of that car talking to the guys!" he said. "Some guys have rifles and they're sitting around here in the hills."

The only moment in which he was of any value was when he was standing on the fringes of this crowd of women; there was no choice but to rush over to him. Only at that point did he do anything, and that was to simply stand there and make it plain that any ideas they had about throwing a blanket over me and tarring and feathering me was no dice.

That's about all on the Crockett thing, except that you still have a very fine, wonderful, loyal bunch of men up there. The old timers are moving along, one after the other. I guess the last of those who were around are men like (Joseph) McIntoffer, who had played football at St. Mary's College, and people like Dan Mahoney, a son of Divvil Mahoney. They're just retired or about to retire. Ham has retired and still lives in Rodeo, close by Crockett.

But there are some very fine young guys who have come along. They are an effective bunch - still very proud of their organization. A couple of years ago I suggested at a membership meeting at Crockett that we negotiate jointly with the sugar workers. I felt we might be better off than having the company continue playing one off against the other.

LG: Apparently they had heard about it earlier because I had mentioned to Ham and the committee that we ought to consider it. In the two days prior to the membership meeting all these pencilled things appeared around the warehouse and on the fork-lifts saying, "VOTE NO," "VOTE NO." At the meeting when I proposed we go into joint negotiations, it all surfaced and one after another said, "Look, we want no part of it."

Here was just a handful of warehousemen compared to the size of the refinery saying, "Lay off the joint negotiations. What we can get, we'll take," they said. "If they can get more, fine - let them go their own way." Some guys getting up and saying, "Now look, Lou, if you feel that you want to do this on your own - good, we'll let them hire you." It wasn't a hostile thing; when the vote was taken, any idea of joint negotiations was overwhelmingly defeated.

We had gone through joint negotiations at one time, at my urging, and we came out very well; but immediately thereafter some of the arch reactionaries in this sugar workers union - and in a small town like this single incidents would hang on for years - adopted a series of motions instructing the officers to have nothing to do with the ILWU, etc. etc.

Well, our guys really had their noses out of joint because they thought that since 1938, a long time, the only real power in Crockett came out of the ILWU because of its ties with longshore. The plant could not operate without the ships bringing in raw sugar and we had within our union all the sugar workers in Hawaii. C & H is a farmers' cooperative - it pays no taxes because it operates as a farmers' processing and distributing cooperative with each of the sugar plantations having a proportionate share based on its tonnage.

So our guys felt very keenly that it was only through our economic power that anything could be done; if the sugar workers felt that way about

LG: having no relations with us, then the hell with them. This was the only industrial plant I know of, at the time we negotiated this last contract, where the rate of pay for warehousemen was above that of the journeymen in the refinery.

That, of course, is a distortion; the reason for it is that they kept playing around in the refinery with percentage increases; there the journeymen on a percentage increase got more than somebody who was just a machine tender in a lower labor grade. It wasn't so much how much they got, it was just that they got more than somebody else.

It's one of the real evils of percentage increases; the guy at the top doesn't measure his increase in terms of what the hell he ought to get in the first place, but only in terms of what he got more. It's a clever use of the employer's pecking structure. Because of that, and because of the fact that we fought constantly for across-the-board increases that the wages in warehouse moved up to the point where they were ahead of the mechanics.

The mechanics were also far more concerned with overtime devices than in actual results in the contract. The plant operated with the ten day operating schedule, called back-to-back schedule, - you work ten days in a row and then get four days off.

In case of any important repairs or overhauls, the mechanics then had to be called in at the end of the ten days, and would pick up a day or two of overtime; that became more important to them than the wages. It's another one of the sicknesses that is reflected in the labor movement, where people start living on overtime. It becomes a way of life.

Ward: You've got a soft spot for Crockett, haven't you?

LG: Yes, I spent a lot of years there. It was understood that when the Crockett contract was open, I'd give them a hand; so that the friendship there went over many, many years.

More CIO Activity

Ward: Very good; now, getting back to the fall of 1938?

LG: Remember when we were talking about the hot box-car, there are a couple of items I think I missed. One was that during the course of this lockout, the Teamster warehouse local - which didn't have a very large membership, maybe around 300 - announced an agreement with the Association of San Francisco Distributors for a master contract, exactly on the terms the employers wanted - a five year contract with no strikes.

I doubt whether it even had an arbitration provision, because all they planned to do was to piggy-back on us and, if possible, continue their raid. Their contract, as I recall, provided for 70 cents an hour, which would have meant surrendering one of our objectives, part of which we had won in the '36 strike; namely, a 75 cents an hour rate. No mention there of the vacation provisions which we were anxious to extend to all workers, because even the vacation provision we had at the time did not cover all employees. Nothing at all about preference of employment.

No question that White's settlement did some damage. In addition the Teamsters, in collusion with an outfit that was called Standard Brands - it was a paper company - tried to open up a liquor warehouse . . . .

Ward: When you say "a paper company" . . .?

LG: I think it was a front. They tried to open up a warehouse and employed some twenty warehousemen to handle the liquor distribution for the same accounts that were locked out. When that took place we had a mass turn-out at Standard Brands, which we figured was just an out and out phony. Luckily, the Teamsters decided after the 1937

LG: confrontation that another to-do along that line was not in their best interest; the place never did open; the company itself disappeared after a while.

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LG: While we didn't win everything in the master contract, basically we picked up the wages we were after, namely 75 cents as a base rate for freight handlers, with other rates adjusted accordingly. We managed to win out on the question of vacation rights, the way they should have been written up. I believe when it came to things like preference of employment, we kept that in just about every place.

There was a modified "hot cargo" clause; namely, that if we struck any warehouse that was not a member of the Distributors' Association, none of our members in the master contract houses would have to handle that cargo. If it was a Distributor house, then of course, under the master contract you have to strike the whole thing anyway; if they wanted a lockout, they'd have to lock out the whole thing.

One area in which I don't believe we won a really clean-cut victory at that time was on the work week. Rathbun, there, sort of cut the baby in half. We had some houses on a forty hour week, some on forty-four. He announced a 42-and-a-half hour week - a very odd one. That would mean that you could have five days of eight hours apiece and a half day of two and one-half hours.

It wasn't too long after that where we got the 40-hour week uniform throughout the industry. I think the biggest thing was that the employers were in effect saying, "Okay, you're here and we're going to have to bargain with you." After the devices and tactics, manoeuvers and everything else that had been going on for what amounted to approximately three and a half years, four years, of continued warfare, the employers had finally decided that this was not the way to go.

LG: It also meant something, of course, that in the long pull it turned out very well; while it is true that maybe in an isolated place or two you might find a warehouse which has a slightly higher rate of pay than the Local 6 agreement; if you take all these warehouses as a group, there is literally no place in the country that even comes close to comparing terms of rates and conditions.

Ward: Another question: in August of 1938 there was the formation of the State CIO, the convention in Los Angeles. And then in November of that year was the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Now, at that time you had become secretary of the State CIO Council, California.

LG: Yes, I was elected at the first convention.

Ward: Right - and you had been Northern California Director of the CIO. Did you still hold that title also?

LG: I might have - for a short time, though. There undoubtedly had to be a transition period because the per capita to the State CIO was very small . .

Ward: And it didn't come in immediately?

LG: No, it would take some time. Eventually I was on that payroll and in between I was Northern California Director. But other things were happening, too. In 1939 they revised the CIO structure on the west coast. Where Harry had been the west coast director of the CIO, he was then limited to California. The north was turned over to a man named Dalrymple - Sherman Dalrymple of the Steel Workers, who I think was a former miner. By the end of 1938 the State CIO was quite sound enough to take care of the costs.

Ward: I know it was solvent enough in early 1939 to hire a legislative representative in Sacramento.

LG: Yes. As secretary of the State CIO I was also, just a matter of changing hats, head of Labor's Non-Partisan League in California. Labor's Non-Partisan League had been initiated by

LG: John L. Lewis. John L. was very distrustful of putting all his eggs in any party basket. While I think he was probably Republican most of his life, as best I could figure out it was not something he espoused.

He had anything but a pleasant relationship with FDR (President Franklin Delano Roosevelt). It came to a head around a miners' strike in the early part of the war; as well as the Wendell Willkie campaign (against FDR) in 1940. It was after the defeat of Wendell Willkie that Lewis made up his mind to leave the presidency of the CIO. That was when he turned it over to Phil Murray (president of the Steel Workers). There was that famous confrontation between Lewis and FDR where he took off on FDR and used the expression that "it ill-suited someone who had supped at labor's table to then condemn with equal impartiality the employers and labor" in the coal miners' beef. Lewis had that turn of words; truly remarkable . . . .

Ward: Biblical -

LG: Some of it biblical - some of it just his own eloquence. I was enormously impressed at one CIO convention - I think it was the one in San Francisco in 1939, when I recall Lewis making several speeches, some of them very, very brief - not more than three or four minutes apiece - on various resolutions; each one was a gem in terms of its structure and the speed at which he got right to the heart of an issue, including one which took a blast at the Red Cross.

Lewis apparently felt very keenly that the so-called "grey ladies" were in the do-gooder class, a form of condescension in helping out people in distress. I guess over the years something had happened and he wasn't too happy about it.

By early 1939 I'm spending all my time with the State CIO, with the exception of breaking loose every once in awhile around some of the ILWU issues. In 1939 there was a Bridges trial; there had been a hearing before then, around 1935,

LG: primarily as a result of all the employer clamor to get rid of the alien Australian.

There were all kinds of accusations, rumors, innuendos that Harry was a British agent; they had him as an agent for a number of different groups around the world. He was a British agent determined to put the American merchant marine out of business. It had nothing to do with the workers' demands, of course, nothing to do with what the employers had done to the workers obviously; can't attack those upstanding gentlemen. There had to be some other motive.

We began to get the first lessons on how red-baiting is used in many ways by the employers, and how later they became so much a part of the thinking of the institutions that are locked in to the society that they turn up in the most peculiar ways. Harry was called either an English agent, or an Australian agent, or a Russian agent - to show how some of the stuff is picked up.

When we were expelled from the CIO in 1949 - I'm jumping ten years now - there had been the business of the Cold War and Fulton, Missouri, (an anti-Russian speech made by the British wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill, at the invitation of the then president of the United States, Harry S Truman), and a number of things that occurred.

We sent a delegation back to the so-called trial the CIC was conducting. It was Arthur Goldberg (then chief counsel for the CIO) who was the prosecutor. One of the men we sent back there was Tony Rania; he was a Filipino, president of the combined local of the ILWU in Hawaii; he had been one of those who had been an early organizer and active rank-and-filer when the union was formed. Tony Rania testified on how much the ILWU had done in Hawaii; what it meant to the plantation workers and so forth.

The reaction of people like Phil Murray and Arthur Goldberg was not that his testimony was false. They put it another way: "What was the

LG: real reason that the ILWU had organized so well in Hawaii?"

It couldn't have been just because of the feudal nature of the plantations and the miserable wage structures, the busting of heads and the cracking of strikes that had gone on for years. It couldn't be that - it had to be something else. What was the real reason that we organized in Hawaii?

I'm giving this as an example of the same sort of thing where a single individual was concerned, like Harry; the whole technique of pilloring people, not because of what they had done, but . . . . what was the real motive behind it?

Ward: At that time Arthur Goldberg was chief counsel for the CIO?

LG: He was chief counsel - right - 1949. I'm jumping quite a number of years.

Ward: Chief counsel - Supreme Court justice - ambassador to the United Nations, and what all?

LG: Correct, correct. Just as a humorous sidelight, I remember going back there when Arthur Goldberg was Secretary of Labor for awhile. John Henning (now head of the California State Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO), had just gone back there to work for the Department of Labor and I happened to be visiting John.

He said, "By the way, there's a bit of a get-together for Arthur Goldberg. It could be that he's about to be appointed to the Supreme Court. I think you ought to come in," and he walked over to Goldberg and said, "You must remember Lou Goldblatt, you helped to expel him from the CIO." (laughter) Goldberg didn't think it was a bit funny and turned to talk to somebody else.

Ward: That was ten years ahead. Now, by 1939 there had been the big victory we thought we had with the election of the new governor.

The Pardoning of Tom Mooney

LG: Right; that was Culbert Olson. That was one of the things where the State Council really wet its feet in that campaign through Labor's Non-Partisan League - there was a real upheaval. I'm trying to recall who Olson was running against: wasn't it (Frank) Merriam?

Ward: He was the incumbent.

LG: Right; and it was Marblehead Merriam who was in power at the time of the '34 strike, I recall, and he was the one who ordered the National Guard -

Ward: He should be because he served a little over one term. When (Governor James) Rolph died Merriam was Lieutenant Governor, if I recall rightly. He assumed governorship automatically for the balance of Rolph's term and then he was elected in '34 and beat (Socialist) Upton Sinclair. The Olson election was in November 1938 and he took office the 1st or 2nd of January, 1939.

LG: That's correct. So, it must have been Merriam. I recall every body calling him Marblehead -

Ward: Marbletop.

LG: And the campaign for the governorship was really an effective one. It crossed all lines, in terms of people who had been victimized by the depression, workers who had become part of this enormous wave of organization.

Things were jumping all over. Woodworkers in the northwest were moving into the union by leaps and bounds; shipyard workers were being organized; the auto plants - there was a sitdown in Richmond, California where, I think, Ford had an assembly plant. They organized the GM plant.

There were the auto plants in L. A. including the airplane plants. The Oil Workers were moving very rapidly. Traditionally open shop

LG: companies like Associated Oil, Union Oil got organized over in the eastbay. Standard Oil wasn't cracked until some time later, as I remember.

This upheaval was going on all over the state and it was not difficult to take the same head of steam and put it in the political campaign, particularly against a target such as Merriam, who was as far as possible in terms of polarity from what we stood for. It was a very successful campaign.

One of the things that we were concerned with was the freedom of Tom Mooney (a militant Socialist and union organizer). After all, he had been in jail since 1916. That was the Preparedness Day parade incident that occurred in San Francisco, so Mooney had been in jail one hell of a long time . . . .

Ward: Twenty-two and half years.

LG: Right. We were campaigning for the freedom of Mooney and Billings (Warren K. Billings, convicted of murder with Mooney). Tom Mooney had taken an unwavering position that he would not accept a parole; that he had been framed. That's a chapter all by itself in American history.

I recall going up to San Quentin to visit Tom Mooney. He had achieved a sort of political status by implication; people would come by all the time to visit him. They would just bring him into the visiting room and you'd talk to him. He was a man of great courage.

Another of the things we were greatly concerned about was the kind of legislature we had in Sacramento. It was almost completely dominated up until those years by outfits like PG&E, Southern Pacific lobby, Kern County Land Company.

Ward: Associated Farmers?

LG: Associated Farmers - they ran that thing as their own club. When I first went up to Sacramento - because I got stuck with some of

LG: this legislative work later on - they paid the legislature for a certain number of weeks. At the end of that period of time the legislators were cut off the payroll, unless they were on some interim committee between sessions of the legislature.

The first thing I discovered on going to Sacramento was that the big lobbies would never push their bills until the very last days of the session; by that time the legislators were broke. It was literally impossible for anybody, including myself, - and Christ knows I wasn't paid much - to walk into the lobby of the Senator Hotel around 5:00 or 5:30 without being stuck with some legislator, his drinks and his dinner bill.

They were sitting around with their tongues hanging out, waiting for a live one. Of course, by that time they were a lead-pipe cinch for the lobbies; the lobbyists knew just what they were doing. The early part of the legislature they would just spin their wheels, keeping things in committee, referring them back, and so forth; they'd wait for the last days and then they would move in.

One of the prime commitments we asked of Olson was support on things like getting rid of the state anti-picketing laws; these laws had become a plague through the entire state. Most of them were county laws, and we were determined that they all had to be defeated. We went through a lot of battles on them. The San Francisco one finally got to the point where nobody was trying too hard to enforce it . . . .

Ward: But we had repealed it in San Francisco before . .

LG: Right. But you went into some of the cow counties - like I remember going up to Shasta County when we had that strike in Redding; the Shasta Dam - and there was still an anti-picketing ordinance. It was during one of the disputes where I was trying to give the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (Union) a hand as secretary of the State CIO.

LG: I had known some of the Mine-Mill guys when they were building Boca Dam (near Truckee, California). A number of them were floaters; they moved from one job to another. They weren't bindle stiffs. A lot of them were Wobblies. The first time I think I met Red Adams (a Mine-Mill leader) was up there at Boca Dam, together with some of his side-kicks like Blackie Dyer, and Arrowsmith - a marvelous bunch of guys.

After Boca Dam, they moved over to Redding; that's where the Laborers (an A F of L union) were brought in to sign back-door contracts with the contractors after the Mine, Mill workers had a majority. It was in Redding that I was faced with a decision; a continued confrontation there was going to be a loser. I didn't see any way they could win it.

We had all kinds of violent overtones. Part of this decision had been based upon some of my readings about the Wobblies; I figured the thing that might appeal to them would be a straight free-speech fight around this anti-picketing ordinance. This ordinance limited pickets, like to three; after that it was an unlawful assembly, or some crap like that. We're talking about 40 years ago.

So we put out a leaflet and the local distributed it. Everybody understood we were calling for out-and-out defiance of the anti-picketing ordinance. Automatically a whole bunch of us - I forget whether it was 50, 60, were all arrested for violating the ordinance. We go down and get booked.

Judge (Jesse) Carter saw it as a free speech fight, and released all of us on our own recognizance. That became Carlson vs. California; that case went to the Supreme Court and the anti-picketing ordinances were thrown out. And the reason it was called Carlson vs. California was because Carlson was the first name in the alphabet of those indicted.

Ward: Were you indicted also?

LG: Yes. The whole group; as a matter of fact, so was Richie Gladstein. He was attorney for the ILWU - he and Aubrey Grossman; they were put on retainer by Local 6. We paid them a lot of money. I think it was $50 a month.

Anyway, back to Olson again and Tom Mooney. One of the commitments we had from Culbert Olson was that his first act in office, not second or third or fourth - would be the pardon of Tom Mooney. It was clearly understood. At that time, as I remember, the secretary of the Mooney-Molders Defense Committee - because the Molders union carried the thing along as a formal group - was attorney Herb Resner.

Anyway, Olson was elected in November, but they always had this gap between the time you were elected and the time you were installed . .

Ward: First Monday in January -

LG: January; and Terry and I had gone up to some place in Truckee, just spending a long weekend up there, near Truckee. It had been a long grind, with the election campaign and everything else. Somebody chased me down there - I had left my phone number in case of anything important - and said they were meeting with Culbert Olson. It was either New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.

Ward: It was New Year's Day, Sunday night - New Year's Eve was on Saturday night. It was the Sunday night and he was to be inaugurated on the Monday morning.

LG: It was just before he was to be inaugurated. He was not in the governor's mansion. He was in a fairly large apartment near the Capitol. Apparently there was considerable urgency in this call because Culbert Olson had indicated that perhaps it was unwise to make the pardon of Tom Mooney his first act in office. He was under the guidance or advice of some of his political cohorts.

LG: Our feelings were that if Mooney was not pardoned at that time, once again we would be back at square one and going around and around forever. Resner had this appointment set up with Culbert Olson and could I take a run down and be there? I know that Culbert Olson was under pressure to renege - that was the thing.

So we gathered at this apartment; Resner, Jack Shelley, Harry See of the Railroad Brotherhood. I think you were there, right?

Ward: Yes. Kidwell . . . .

LG: Yes, Kidwell - he was still active at the time, though getting along in years. Slim Connelly? I'm not sure if he was there or not -

Ward: I don't think so - I know there were guys there from Eureka to San Diego.

LG: Right. It was a fairly large group. There must have been at least fifteen of us, maybe more, all crowded into this apartment. Olson was damn defensive and angry, as though anybody could ever doubt him; he was in effect being accused of going back on his commitments and he wasn't that kind of a man.

As I remember everybody was very, very insistent; they just took the same position - no ifs, ands, buts - no business of a 24-hour delay, no 40-hour delay, no nothing. Everybody just kept asking the same question. "Is the commitment still good?"

Toward the end of the session - Herb Resner, by the way, did a very good job - a number of us were asking, "Look, we would like to be there at the inauguration - and we particularly want to be there because Tom Mooney is being released." There was also insistence that Tom Mooney be brought to the legislature to receive the pardon. And finally, Olson said okay, he would go through with it.

We in turn made preparations to be there for the inauguration, in part to make sure he would not back away. And sure enough he was sworn in and Tom Mooney was pardoned.

Ward: Olson announced at his inaugural that he would pardon Mooney the following Saturday.

LG: Yes, you're right. Literally it was his first act in office.

Ward: The pardon was a question of getting a place and setting it up.

LG: Right. Well, our concern was the Senate, which was a highly reactionary body. As a matter of fact, they blocked almost everything he wanted in the following legislature.

Ward: He did nothing . . . .

LG: He wound up empty-handed and he began to back away more and more and more. The Yorty (Assemblyman Sam Yorty, who turned Red-hunter) Committee got busy under Olson. As a matter of fact, we had supported both Yorty and (Assemblyman Jack) Tenney - Tenney was in the Musicians' Union - "Mexicali Rose" (a popular song) by Tenney - in the elections in L. A. Tenney was a part of the red-baiting group.

It was Yorty who later did all the damage, particularly in the way of discharges. They cleaned out, oh, the whole State Relief Administration; people like Bill Plunkert (a prominent social worker) got the axe. Terry did - she was working for him at that time.

Ward: Terry did?

LG: Yes.

Ward: Rose Segure (social worker)?

LG: Rose Segure, of course. She was a close friend of the Plunkerts and later became a close friend of Mike Quill (head of the Transport Workers' Union). Many years later, Rose Segure tried to act as a sort of intermediary in patching up things between ourselves and Mike Quill.

Anyway, the pardon of Tom Mooney did take place. It was the end of that week, Saturday, I guess it was; the (legislature's) Assembly

LG: chamber was jammed. My dad and my mother had been part of this campaign for the freedom of Tom Mooney for years. I got in touch with my mother - I think it was the first time she ever set foot in an airplane - and she flew up and came to this ceremony in the Assembly chamber in Sacramento to witness the pardon of Tom Mooney.

Afterwards a group of us went over to have lunch in a Mexican restaurant in Sacramento, and I brought my mother along. This was a big thing for me and for her. She reported back to this little group she belonged to - these various progressive groups - mostly Jewish - about the ceremony. It was a fascinating climax to the sort of thing which in most cases doesn't end that well.

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Ward: Lou, you were talking about this function after the Tom Mooney pardon with your mother.

LG: Oh, it was a big thing. After all, she and her friends had been campaigning from 1916 or '17 until 1939. I felt elated that I was able to pay back, sort of . . . a general feeling of obligation for some of the things my folks believed in which helped to condition me as a youngster.

Ward: It was a rare occasion?

LG: Yes. We headed back at once to San Francisco where my mother took a plane back. We had to get ready for Tom Mooney to come to San Francisco.

Ward: It was Sunday, the 8th -

LG: Sunday, the 8th. We had all kinds of work to do. We decided there would be a march up Market Street with Tom Mooney at the head of the parade. We also arranged that there would be a speakers' platform at the Civic Center where the parade would wind up. All of our planning notwithstanding, it turned out to be hopeless.

LG: There was really no parade. There was an attempt to put together a parade, but we quickly discovered that any effort to set up a disciplined parade just wouldn't work. People swarmed around Mooney. We got around oh, two or three hundred of our biggest guys, and sort of formed a circle around Tom Mooney and some of the leaders of the labor movement who were walking with him and at least protected him from the crush of the crowd.

Ward: Well, it was more than that too; there were death threats . . . .

LG: There might have been, but nobody was paying any attention to them. Some of the nuts, some of the vigilantes, I suppose, who might have been around in 1934, '35, part of the backwash of the general strike.

Market Street was just black with people for its whole length; photographs show that when the parade got to the turning point on Grove Street, all of Market Street right down to the Ferry Building was just one mass of humanity.

It was the biggest turnout I have ever seen anywhere around a single issue. We've had some Labor Day parades that took three or four hours, but this was different. It was just a swarm, none of it in any way difficult or fractious; a great celebration. Mooney spoke, a bit too long, but so many things stored up for so many years, you see. Even Rena Mooney* turned up for that. Tom didn't live too long after that.

Ward: His guts had been ruined, prison diet . . .

LG: That was quite a day. That's all we ever got out of Olson - the freedom of Tom Mooney -

Ward: I think so.

LG: Olson had some good proposals but they all died in the legislature. For what reason the Yorty Committee, the Tenney Committee, got under way, I don't know myself; except that part of the clash between Olson and the legislature was a

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* Tom Mooney's estranged wife.

LG: situation where the legislature could pick up certain things on their own and run away with them. And where you found an ambitious character like Yorty and a man who turned renegade like Tenney; unfortunately, people we had supported.

Ward: Well, then we come on through '39 and the next interesting point would be the Bridges trial with (James M.) Landis, wasn't it?

LG: Those hearings were on Angel Island at the old Immigration station. We used to commute every day by boat from San Francisco. The story was told that on one of these trips Landis took the wheel for a while and said, "Well, this is my chance now - I'm heading right for Australia." Well, while that trial was going on all kinds of things were going on at the same time. All my attention at that time was devoted to the CIO. That meant helping to set up local labor councils. It was just getting too crowded around the Balboa Building where we'd been. Anyway we got ourselves bigger headquarters.

Disturbing War Rumbles

The organizational drives were going full blast. The invasion of Poland did not make that much of a dent in the organizational drive, though politically things began to get reflected all over the place. There were a number of issues which many of us were concerned about.

All of us were aware of the attempts on the part of the Soviet Union to build some sort of a collective security pact; the efforts of (Maxim) Litvinov (U.S.S.R. foreign secretary under Stalin); the invasion of Finland, "poor little Finland." The Finns, the political group in power at that time, were fairly close to Germany. There was the Mannerheim Line (a fortification of the Finnish-Russian border). I guess the Russians had pretty well decided that the way things were going, their inability to

LG: get a coalition together to stop Hitler, whether or not they liked it, they were going to be on their own pretty soon. After all, (Neville) Chamberlain (British prime minister prior to World War II) had come back from Germany with "peace in our time," after the surrender of the Sudetenland. Hitler had picked up Austria, part of Czechoslovakia.

There were all kinds of political debates going on. Beginning with the civil war in Spain, it was hard to reach any conclusion other than the fact that the clash between Hitler and the Soviet Union was inevitable.

On the other hand, there were all kinds of debates going on about the Russians moving into Poland about the same time that the Germans did. It was the period of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. (An agreement between Vyacheslav M. Molotov for the U.S.S.R. and Joachim von Ribbentrop for Germany which temporarily postponed open hostilities between the two nations). For those of us on the left, the flack was flying from all directions.

Ward: Japanese too?

LG: The Japanese question was separate. We didn't tie into any German-Japanese axis at the time. The action at the Marco Polo Bridge signaled the invasion of China by Japan; I think it took place in 1937. The union itself (I'm talking now specifically of the longshoremen) had gone through a whole period of stoppages of work on the use of ships for scrap iron to Japan; these had been going on since 1938.

I remember a demonstration against the arrival of the Karlsruhe. That was a German training ship after Hitler had come to power. All these things were closing in on everybody. We knew a lot of what Hitler stood for; his announcements for getting rid of everything that tainted the Aryan race, but I don't think we were aware of the whole "final solution" program (the extermination of Jews).

LG: While you had all these debates on the question of industrial unionism, other debates took place on a quite higher level; Hitler, Spanish civil war, and so forth. This went on both as individuals and as a union; we felt very keenly that what was going on in Spain, particularly with the help that was being given Franco by (Benito) Mussolini and Hitler, these were forerunners of wholesale repression.

While no one had taken Mussolini all that seriously, even as a fascist regime, all of a sudden some of its further implications began to come through to us. You might recall some of the airplane attacks by Mussolini's airmen, including either a son-in-law or someone . . .

Ward: A son.

LG: Son - including the descriptions of the bombing of . . .

Ward: Ethiopia -

LG: And Spain. He had invaded Ethopia, yes, earlier. Things were going on in our own ranks; the question of who went to Spain was constantly on the agenda. Some close friends of mine on the waterfront decided to go to Spain.

One awfully good guy I had been close to, Jack Egan, he went to Spain; the last they saw of him was when he decided to go after a tank with a hand grenade in each hand; that was the last of him and the tank. He had a younger brother who never got over it.

You had a combination of large scale union movements, strikes breaking out in every direction, and the political fight going on at the same time. Deportation attempt against Harry; struggle over questions such as "poor little Finland;" the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

Trying to keep your bearings in all of this was not the easiest thing in the world; your leftwingers were doing valiant service as organizers and leaders, trying to get certain

LG: things done when you knew that the parameters were specifically limited. It was a rough period, and a very exciting one. No question about that.

Labor Spies

Ward: Would you like to talk about the spies for a minute? Arthur Scott Kent? Jim O'Neill, who was one in a way --

LG: Jim O'Neill was just a weak guy, more than anything else, plus Jim had lost his battle with John Barleycorn. Jim O'Neill was our PR man, did our radio program. I recall Jim going to the clink for 30 days around a dispute we had at the Teagarden warehouse in North Beach.

The employers decided to run scabs in these covered vans and one day a big beef blew up and some of the trucks got overturned and what-have-you. Dominic Gallo, a very tough little short guy, managed to get his hands on a couple of these strike-breakers and they surely weren't the same very quickly. He was one of those who did time and Jim O'Neill did time.

We never had any feeling that Jim O'Neill was a labor spy. I think what happened was that they got to him a bit later. No question, later on he went through that crazy business, first testifying against Harry and then repudiating it - obviously a very weak guy. There were guys who were active in the labor councils or in the Guild or other unions who later turned up on the witness stand. Not during the Landis (James M. Landis, who presided at the first trial of Harry Bridges) thing -

Ward: There was one -

LG: Yes -

Ward: (Miles) Humphrey.

LG: Yes, Humphrey. I think Lundeberg turned up in the next trial. George Wilson was active in the Newspaper Guild at the time.

Ward: Yes, he was the second secretary of the Bridges Defense Committee - the second trial.

LG: Merv (Mervyn) Rathborne, who was active in the ACA (American Communications Association), the radio operators. He later became secretary of the State CIO. Henry Schrimpf was a witness. John Shoemaker; these and others turned up at a later trial.

Ward: Shoemaker was a longshoreman -

LG: Longshoreman, right, very active in the 1934 strike. Mike Quin in his book, The Big Strike, specifically mentions John Shoemaker - he made a big impression - a big man - his stature, short cropped hair, looked like a typical longshoreman; and a very dedicated one. I did mention one man from Local 6 who disappeared - a man by the name of Tarling; the fact that some report he wrote fell into our hands.

Ward: Oh, yeah.

LG: He suddenly disappeared. Some of them, I'm sure, were industrial spies who were bought for certain jobs. Some of them were turned up by the LaFollette Committee (a Congressional investigating group headed by U. S. Senator Robert LaFollette) later on.

I don't recall the guy's name, but he was one of those who was active in Crockett - he worked in the refinery. He had become part of this group which was trying to take the refinery into the CIO. I remember a meeting with the leadership of this group that was trying to move into the refinery; by that time a couple of the guys had gotten fired.

I said, "Look, this whole thing looks too much like a put-up job by the company. One thing you ought to be careful of is, under no circumstances do you put up a picket line because the

LG: Local 6 contract is open. If we have to we'll shut it down, around the contract demands, but to get sidetracked on this first and then try to add the Local 6 strike to it, you'll be biting off more than you can handle. It would be better to keep plugging away with the National Labor Relations Board and then bring the thing to a head when the warehouse negotiations come to a head; do it at the same time."

This guy was at the meeting and it must have lasted until about 12:30 or 1:00 o'clock because I drove back and I got a phone call at 6:30 in the morning from Crockett. This guy said, "Look, I know we talked about it last night, but that's a lot of bunk. Let's throw up a picket line." He was without any question a provocateur.

He disappears the next day - within 48 hours. The next I hear about him, he suddenly bought a service station somewhere in the eastbay. I'm sure that outfits like the Pinkertons and what-have-you were making nothing but hay. They must have honey-combed all the unions.

Ward: Did you ever run into Captain Bakcsy? Used to hold all these parties down at Carmel and invite all these suspected Communists and leftwingers?

LG: No, I used to go down to Carmel but I don't remember him. I remember going to Carmel and meeting Lincoln Steffens (a famous writer) married to Ella Winter at the time, and they had this little young one, Peter Steffens. I remember going to Lincoln Steffens' house any number of times; he was a delight to talk to.

He had a faculty of sort of picking you up in the middle of an idea and saying, "Now, wait a minute - I know what you're saying, but let's go back to the beginning of this thing to find out how you ever reached this conclusion?" He had this technique of forcing you to think things through. I got to know him and Ella Winter and some of the other people around Carmel through Dan James.

LG: When I was at Cal I had known Dan James; his wife later wrote this musical comedy "Bloomer Girl." At that time, Dan would go down to Carmel and stay at his folks' place. His father was very wealthy - he was the James Pottery Company of St. Louis, I think. He built this fabulous place - it was just below Carmel Highlands and built right on the cliffs. I'd go down there and spend weekends sometimes with Dan. We were quite good friends; we used to walk a lot, throw cans out in the ocean and try to pick them off with a .22, things of that sort.

Ward: Did you ever have anything to do with Arthur Scott Kent? He was a sidekick of Mooney - they met in San Quentin.

LG: Yes. I remember him. But not much.

(Interview 10: 18 April, 1978)

Ward: Lou, you had another Crockett story that happened later.

LG: Yes. It was a friendship I had up there that carried on throughout the years I was with the union, a very close friendship. There was a running confrontation in Crockett between the management and our union. They figured we were irascible and impossible; paid no attention to what they happened to do with this company union they had in the refinery.

The company was constantly doing surveys of big factories where they could show that the warehousemen were paid nothing like our guys were. That didn't carry any water with us, but some very peculiar negotiations were bound to result. They always felt that there was some kind of a diabolical plot somewhere in the wind.

We had a great deal of leverage, after all. It wasn't only that we had the warehousemen in Crockett; we also had standing with us the longshoremen; Crockett could not operate unless the

LG: longshoremen were working, for obvious reasons; all the raw sugar came there from Hawaii.

Around 1940 or 1950, after the war, the man in charge of the Crockett operation was William Tyler; everybody called him "Call Me Bill" Tyler - his way of establishing informality. He was also a very high-strung man, particularly when it came to dealing with the ILWU.

Tyler, about that time, divorced his wife and married his secretary. When I heard of this I made the crack to somebody, around the office, "Well, that will set back office worker organization at least 20 years." Because that was the thinking of a lot of secretaries, that eventually they would marry the boss.

But that wasn't the story I was going to tell you about. We were in a set of negotiations, and in those days we were talking pennies most of the time. Sometimes the settlement might be in the range of six, six and a half, seven cents - maybe a dime.

Ward: This was after the war.

LG: After the war, oh sure; it was before the rapid inflation period. We had a big move going on after the war in Warehouse; OPA had been repealed and with the leadership of Gene Paton the local managed to compel increases, even though the contract was not open, by a series of slowdowns, job action.

We had gotten a call from Tyler who said he wanted to talk to Chili and myself. Well, we had talked at great length in the committee and knew where the differences were. Most of the issues were resolved except wages. There the company offered somewhere around 4 or 5 cents. Chili and I huddled about the thing and we said, "All right, if we can get this guy to go to 6-½ cents, the committee figures it's okay. It doesn't pay to take a strike over what remains."

After Chili and I and the committee had pretty much made up our minds, we went into Tyler's office; he was awfully fidgety, walking back and

LG: forth behind his desk. Then he let go with quite a tirade - how as far back as he could think, the Warehouse local there had constantly been determined to upset Crockett. Why is it that we are always determined to get a strike? He couldn't understand. But, damn it, he was going to make every effort to avoid a strike.

We don't say anything; we're just sitting there listening to him, and he finally concluded, "Look, like it or not, I'm going to offer you 7 cents. I know your attitude; you guys are just determined to fight; I'll offer you a 7-cent an hour increase." I don't say a word and I look at Chili and start shaking my head in disbelief. Chili and I had just agreed that six, six and a half cents would do it.

Tyler interprets my shaking my head at Chili as a "no". And he says, "All right, it's seven and a half and I'm telling you right now, that's final." And I'm still shaking my head and still haven't said a word. Finally, he says, "I'm going to bring this damn thing to a head and that's it. It's 8 cents, take it or leave it."

So, we finally leaned back and said, "Well, if you feel about it that way, I guess we'll take the 8 cents." That's the only set of negotiations I can recall where we reached an agreement on more than what we ever anticipated, by never saying a word.

Union Leadership vs. Leftwing Politics

Ward: Okay. Now let's go back a few years . . . as you became active in the trade union movement more and more, accepting greater and greater responsibilities, were there any changes in your personal relationship with the Communist party, in your thinking and your action?

LG: Not fundamentally. I'd say that there were changes in one area.

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Ward: You were saying, Lou, that as you became more active in trade union affairs, there were one or two things -

LG: What happened, I think, was something over which you would have no direct control. Unless you were awfully thick, what got to you was the whole business of timing, what issues could be effectively presented, a real consciousness of how the rank and file would react.

It was not just a business of adopting a resolution; in many cases, this was the easiest thing in the world, particularly if you put it vaguely enough. The one thing that became most important was the measurement of any political action or position.

How the thing could be bounced off the membership and to what degree they would support it? It was not a question of tailism, waiting for the workers to move before you start running to catch up.

Leadership had with it certain obligations. The job of leadership meant that you would reflect as best you could the reservations, sometimes the reluctances, priorities, of the people you represented. This became a measure of leadership.

It did not mean in any way compromising what I thought. An individual in my position, or any trade unionist, cannot over any long period of time make the price of his leadership the automatic support of the rank and file. You could not demand that price, but you could demand that you handle yourself with confidence and knowledge of the issue.

What you could insist upon was that just because you had been elected a leader did not mean you had to give up any of your ideas. It was around this, for example, that we would fight things like redbaiting; and actually not so much the fight against redbaiting; the more correct way of appraising that would be, the right of a Red to retain his opinion when he was

LG: a union man. You began to put these things in a different equation; as a union we were not trying to change somebody's religious opinion; we were not trying to change their political registration. Neither was it anybody else's damn business how you as a leader felt about issues or political opinions or political registration.

This sort of balance had to be achieved, which meant also that any relations with something like the CP (Communist party) you would weigh constantly. You would speak up on them, pretty pointedly, because on many scores it was not that the CP was wrong - it was right.

They were right on every issue from Loyalist Spain to the battle for the Scottsboro Boys (a political struggle on behalf of nine black youths) to the freedom of Tom Mooney, their thinking about a socialist society, their support of the Soviet Union against Hitler.

The issue was, how could a person in leadership exercise judgment in these questions so as to move the membership along with him; not to sit there blandly and flow with the tide, not to duck all issues.

In some cases there were some pretty sharp confrontations. For example, there was a period there when the Catholic church had a pretty violent reaction against Loyalist Spain. There was a long period of that; but those of us who had any kind of a leadership influence or position never backed away on the question of Loyalist Spain. The same way when it came to the whole question of the fight on racial discrimination, which we started very early.

In the case of Longshore, they had quite a struggle on the question of racial discrimination because apparently some blacks had been brought on the waterfront; I think they were American-Hawaiian gangs and they had been brought on the waterfront during the 1920 strike.

Ward: When you say American-Hawaiian, you mean the steamship company?

LG: Yes, American-Hawaiian Steamship Company. That was the one Roger Lapham was the head of. It's a shipping company that somehow managed to lose all its ships during the war, World War II. I'm not saying they were in collusion with anybody, but somehow all of their ships went down. They wound up as the wealthiest shipping company, without a single ship, when the war was over.

There was a problem of taking on the issue in Longshore. The blacks were accepted as part of the union and a number of them became very active. Some of them were just splendid examples of good, solid trade unionists with a lot of leadership ability.

One of the old-time longshoremen who came to the surface was a man named Joe White. When he retired he moved down to some small town near Fresno and was elected mayor there. One of the stories I remember about him: he was up in Coos Bay when Harry was in jail after the outbreak of the Korean War - Harry had taken a position that there ought to be a cease-fire and the killing ought to stop; that was when Judge Harris made the statement that in this time of peril there was no room for minority opinion, and he put Harry in the clink and he was in for several weeks.

We had a very sharp caucus up in Coos Bay - one that was really quite crucial; a couple of odd things happened. Some of the reactionary characters from Portland made a proposal that we take the honorary membership away from Paul Robeson (famous black singer and actor) which we had granted to him and give it to Jackie Robinson (a black baseball star). This was really interesting, coming from Portland. It was finally voted down.

But the story about Joe White is different. Apparently, one night some of the guys decided to call on one of the cat houses in North Bend or Coos Bay. Joe White is sort of leading the group and they call at this cat house and the madam takes one look at Joe White, very black colored guy, and she tells Joe, "Look, we don't mix them here." And Joe, without blinking an eye, turned to her and said, "If my friends can't come in, neither am I."

Ward: Getting back to the relationship --

LG: The relationship with the party was such that you began to measure things in a different way. Certain party leaders were far more flexible and understood these things better than others. Sam Darcy - and this was true of the '34 strike, as well as in later years - was head of the Communist party in California. He had a pretty good feel of the problem that any trade union leader would have, or any leader of a mass organization; recognized the importance of not spinning your wheels on every issue.

There was a question of looking for the key link in the chain of events that you could grasp, that you could carry. Walter Lambert had very much the same feeling and would never argue with you as to your appraisal of what the membership would or would not do in a particular situation or in a particular issue. He felt that was your problem and that was your judgment.

That was what you were down there for; not just to draw a salary or to conduct a set of negotiations once in a while, or just say "yes." On that score, he was a very independent guy. His brother, Rudy, (Rudy Lambert, another Communist official) I don't recall having too much contact with. For one thing, he was handling some other work in the party machinery and I don't think he was that close to the trade unionists.

You can't call it drifting away; I guess what would be more accurate would be to say you got a different sense of priorities and a different set of values and a better understanding of what the hell your job was. I've always felt that with trade union leadership or leadership of any mass organization there comes a certain number of obligations that you cannot avoid; and if you try to duck them you are either going to capitulate or you are going to turn phony.

One, of course, you damn well had better know your job. It's a rare thing to find a good union official who is not at the same time, or

LG: who has not been a good worker on the job. The worker's reaction would be if he is an incompetent in one place, he will be incompetent in another place.

If someone is a goof-off on the job; if he doesn't do his share of the work or gives the other guy a "Portugee lift," as they call it - that means the guy picks up his end of the sack first and the other guy has all the weight to pick up - if he has no respect for that man as a worker, then the reaction will be pretty much the same as to any aspirations he has as a union leader.

Ch, that was a form of drifting away, but it wasn't in any sense a break. I'd say that that took place later on -

Ward: I'm talking about the beginnings of substituting your own judgment for that of someone who sat up at 121.

LG: I think this became symptomatic of a lot of the leftwingers in the trade union movement, particularly those who survived. After all, it has to be borne in mind that the CIO on the west coast in some areas had the same impact that it might have in Pittsburgh, Chicago; such as Los Angeles, where you had large rubber plants - the Firestone plant and a couple of others - some large auto plants. You had the airplane manufacturers like North American which were organized early by the Auto Workers. So, it had some of the same impact there.

But in a place like northern California it was almost as much a question of principle and a belief in industrial unionism; that was the highly motivating thing. The northwest, it was the IWA (International Woodworkers of America; (Harold) Pritchett was the president initially. Later he was forced out of the country by the Immigration Department because he was Canadian and had never become an American citizen. Hal, by the way, is still alive. His son, Craig, is our regional director in Canada.

LG: In the Northwest it became a real running feud between the IWA and the Carpenters, who suddenly decided to organize industrially rather than have the woods and the sawmills organized by the IWA. The net result was that your leftwing leadership in all parts of the coast either survived by some pretty good solid, independent judgment or they'd fall victim to the whole attack because they couldn't hold the membership; that became the key.

A Lively Social Life

Ward: I see. Well, I think that solves that for the moment. Now, on your personal situation, you and Terry, for whatever reason, decided to get married.

LG: That's right - we'd been living together since around late in 1935, and in 1939 we pretty well decided that we ought to have a family. That was the main reason we got married. We got married by Reverend Herrick Lane and the man who stood up for us was Aubrey Grossman. My friendship with Aubrey, by the way, goes back about 50 years. Herrick Lane was a fine man; matter of fact, I called him at the time my daughter, Ann, was getting married to David King, some ten years ago. Apparently, he was busy or something and we had some judge do the ceremony. But Herrick Lane must have thought about that because about a couple of months later he came to the office at 150 Golden Gate to re-introduce himself and sort of apologize for not having met our request.

Ward: Any comments on the cause parties and the social life of which you were a part?

LG: Oh, yes. The cause dinners and cause dances made up a very large part of our social life. I think this was true of everybody on the left. There was always something doing on support for Loyalist Spain during that period; the constant meetings in support of Tom Mooney. PW (The Peoples' World, a Communist newspaper) parties were frequent.

LG: The union itself would have all kinds of social functions. A good many of our social engagements revolved around a lot of these cause parties. As I recall, they were pretty exuberant affairs - you felt good about them. It was a good family.

Ward: They were working parties in a sense, too, because you made contact there.

LG: You made contact with people. If there were trade unionists who you felt wanted to go just beyond the nickel and dime demands in the contract, you'd make it your business to invite them there. It was never this business, you know, that they try to paint that it was subversive and all this crap. That had nothing to do with it at all. Quite to the contrary, it was built around friendship and social engagements. This became a big part of the social life of almost all the people I could think of in the left.

Ward: Yes, it was a good time.

LG: Those were good times and they were exuberant times. We were riding a pretty good wave. We felt that history and developments were very much on our side. The country was finally climbing out of the depression; organization was going full blast. We won some very important victories.

A lot of the unions were establishing themselves as the conscience of the trade union movement. That's why I always felt that our expulsion from the A F of L, and later our expulsion from the CIO, was really a form of hari-kiri by the A F of L and the CIO. I think that if there's any one single thing that's responsible for the trade union problems in this country it was that whole series of expulsions and the redbaiting that went with it.

Ward: Well, you'd run into some of these A F of L guys whom you knew at these parties - it was a mixed bag?

LG: Oh, sure. There were all kinds of good, solid trade unionists; some of them not all that politically inclined; some of them left-inclined; some of them just genuine people, for example, who carried over some of the Wobbly tradition. I'm talking about people like Joe Murphy, who was head of the Laborers' Union - -

Ward: Jack Wagner?

LG: Jack Wagner was a good example. He was with the Pile Drivers Union. There were people like Dan Del Carlo, (secretary of the San Francisco Building Trades Council), who was very friendly to our union. There were any number of them who were simply carrying on as best they could what they had picked up in the Wobblies.

Many of the individuals who came out of that Wobbly movement were fundamentally very sound on a couple of things; they had absolutely no fear of socialism; if anything, they leaned toward it. Of course they thought of socialism in more of a syndicalist fashion - one big union - and were quite distrustful of some of the political sides of socialism, but they were not allergic.

They definitely were not redbaiters; if anything, they understood the danger of redbaiting, particularly after what had happened in the Palmer raids right after World War I.

Ward: Centralia.

LG: Right - Centralia, Washington; Wesley Everest; they felt very keenly about the right of people to believe as they pleased. There was also a wonderful, sort of a goyishe chutzpah -

Ward: Chutzpah?

LG: Chutzpah, you know - I guess the closest definition you can get to it is that it's a form of arrogance and defiance. You've heard the story of this young man who is brought to trial for having killed his mother and father and pleads

LG: for clemency on the grounds that he's an orphan. That takes chutzpah, you see. But a goyishe chutzpah is a sort of gentile chutzpah.

With my own background and my own beliefs, I always had a certain admiration for a group of people in this country that ranged from some of the Wobblies I knew to some rather prominent people like Bob Kenney (one-time State Senator, California Attorney-General and judge). They just seem to take their democratic rights of personal belief, refusal to redbait - seem to have taken it with their mother's milk. It never frightened them.

There was a certain great feeling, "Look, this is our country; just because you happen to wrap yourself up in the American flag doesn't make it your country." I'll never forget an old-time Wobbly, now retired, a member of our union named Paul Keady from Newport, Oregon. It was during one of the debates on the Vietnam war or the Korean war when there was a lot of this rabid redbaiting, flag-waving.

In his own way and strictly as a kind of grass roots simple American, he would sort of fit the definition that if you dropped him out of an airplane anywhere on the west coast, he'd somehow make a living. He got up and made a a speech that literally shook up everybody in the place and cooled off this hysteria.

The point he made was very simple: he wasn't going to argue his patriotism with anybody; it wasn't any of their damn business; his life and his record spoke for themselves. When certain things were important, he'd support them; when it came to fighting in World War II, he had done his share.

And he said, "As to these flag wavers, I have no objection to that either. I don't have an objection to them even when they take the American flag and cut themselves a coat out of it. But, damn it, when they cut themselves a vest and a pair of pants out of the American flag they have gone just a bit too damn far." (laughter)

LG: This stripe of person was attracted to the CIO, to support of Loyalist Spain, to the whole fight for freedom of expression by the left-wing. They might not agree at all times, but their minds were open.

These were the sort of people you knew you had to have with you; either that or you were fighting a lost cause. Some people thought that triumph was going down with your flags flying. So what? It was far more important to try to measure things against people of this stripe.

Ward: Incidentally, you mentioned a while back that the Catholic church took violent opposition to Loyalist Spain. Is that where the ACTU played a role in local trade unionism?

LG: I think the ACTU had started by then, although -

Ward: Before the war, it was a problem?

LG: It was before the war and during the war - both. It disappeared later on, the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, the group you're talking about. The man who was very prominent in that was a Father Rice. I think he was in New Orleans - he was based there, in the South somewhere.

He actually put out pamphlets on how to stack a union meeting; instructions on how the Catholics should handle themselves; all, of course, directed against the left. Whether he was a direct disciple of Father Coughlin (a famous radio priest), I don't know. You remember him, of course, a dangerous man.

As far as we were concerned, they became much more prominent in the years after the war. That's when they became quite a pain in the ass to us; set up basic ACTU chapters in Longshore and Warehouse. They got mixed up in attempts to raid the ILWU after we were expelled from the CIO. I'll never forget one of our longshoremen, Johnny O'Connor. He was a very tough little guy -

Ward: Ex-pug -

LG: Ex-pug, wonderful guy, a lovely family, a very ardent Catholic. I don't think he ever missed mass. He came to Harry and myself as we were sitting around and he said, "Look, they're trying to get me into the ACTU; what do you think I ought to do?" And Harry said, "Why don't you join? Find out for yourself." Well, he did.

The very first meeting he goes to, the local leader in San Francisco of the ACTU was a teamster, who was also mixed up in some very aggressive raiding activity against the ILWU. As soon as the meeting starts, he starts taking off against the ILWU and why the ACTU had to take it apart. And Johnny O'Connor got up and said, "Look, nobody can blast my union that way." That just about ended the meeting. There were very few meetings called after that.

Ward: And Johnny would have done that.

LG: Yes, Johnny would have done that. Sure.

You were asking about Terry and I getting married and somehow we got off on these other things.

Ward: And then the social life . . . .

LG: While all this was going on, the social life was sort of squeezed in between work schedules that ran, oh, 14 and 16 hours a day. They seemed to be endless. A lot of the ground that I covered had to be by car because there were all sorts of out of the way places. I remember that the State Council began to become the depository of some of the more difficult beefs.

They (some unions) were reaching into areas where it was inevitable for them to run into a bunch of scissor-bills and people who were very hostile to the whole union movement. There were Woodworkers' strikes, and I remember going to Westwood. George Andersen (an ILWU attorney) went along with me. This was after we got word

LG: that they had run the strikers out of town - the vigilantes had. As George and I got towards Westwood - maybe within 15 or 20 miles - here were some of the families of the guys who had been run out of town.

When we went in there, it was an armed camp. The man who was the head of the company - I think it was a family concern - was named Walker. I said, "Look, we want the families reunited and coming back into town." He was sort of half listening.

Obviously the strike was lost, although eventually I think they came back and did re-organize it. A lot of the strikers were from the area they called "old town" - made up of Italians. During the midst of this a fire wagon began to sound and this guy Walker jumps over and grabs one of these fire hats and a jacket and says, "I'll see you later," goes out and jumps in the wagon; they were waiting for him.

I couldn't help but feel, "There's a pyro-maniac, if I ever saw one in my life." (laughter) Westwood is not operating anymore. They finally timbered out there, and more recently the whole town was sold.

I remember getting a call from a Mine-Mill guy who said that the guys at the New Idria mine had walked out. New Idria mine was one of the places where (former President) Herbert Hoover built up his fortune; it's way back in the hills from Hollister, and I went down there. These people had been driven out of town; it was so common in these small company towns.

They were mostly Spaniards. They were camped alongside the road and it was raining miserably. We went in there to hammer things out with the company. People went back to town; in that case the union managed to hang on all right; but talk about a desolate, god-forsaken area, that was it. There were all kinds of other things going on - the organization of the fishermen. I learned much in that period about the basic need for what was then being called "united front".

LG: The need was for maintaining some sort of collective understanding and leadership in the CIO; you were dealing with such divergent characters; everybody from a Sherman Dalrymple to the Coulter brothers and some just plain old-line trade unionists, some stick-in-the-muds. There was a crazy melange and the only thing you had in common was that we were part of the CIO.

Ward: And accepted John L. as the leader?

LG: No question about that.

Ward: So now we come on to . . . .

LG: The '39 CIO Convention which took place in San Francisco and the State CIO coordinated with it. It was at that convention that I really had a chance to not only meet John L. Lewis but to talk to him a bit.

Ward: You went to Treasure Island with him . . . .

LG: Yes, I went to Treasure Island with him, and I got to know (his daughter) Kathy Lewis very well. She became a good friend of mine; she liked us out here.

Ward: Some people found her a bit of a problem.

LG: She was; I think that later on she got mixed up with this America First (an extreme right-wing political group), though there was an attempt to disclaim it. John L. was pretty much of an isolationist, really. He distrusted American foreign policy, and particularly distrusted any connections with the British -

Ward: Well, he was of Welsh background.

LG: He was a Welshman, yes, and Welshmen don't have much use for the British. They've always felt that if you have any alliance with Great Britain, it would only be because the British wanted to use you in some way. Kathryn Lewis spent a lot of time with us.. She was a heavy woman . . .

Ward: Very stout . . .

LG: Very stout; she wasn't too attractive, but she was pleasant enough. I recall a party we had at the place Terry and I were living at that time. We had moved to a penthouse . . .

Ward: On the curve going up to Telegraph Hill?

LG: Right, it was just before the last turn. Oh, we paid a big rent there. Both of us were working then, so we were making a lot of money. We paid $65 a month.

Ward: Terrific!

LG: That was a good deal of rent. We moved out of there when Annie (Goldblatt's oldest daughter) came along in 1941 and took a place on Green Street, which was a little more reasonable - $42.50. By that time, Terry had quit work.

It was a nice interlude up there (on Telegraph Hill); it had become a gathering place for a lot of people. And it was a hell of a good party pad - no two ways about that. Towards the end of the convention, I had managed to hustle a batch of wine from the Wine Institute. In those days they were trying to advertise California wines, and I told them one of the chances to advertise was for the convention dinner.

They sent down a few cases of wine and a case of champagne which they thought would be for the head table. We never got around to using the champagne for the head table; and we kept that and I said, "Well, okay, the least we could do is take some of the staff who worked their tails off, and we'd have a bit of a party. I recall Lee Pressman (CIO attorney) was there and I think, Len DeCaux (editor of the CIO News) was . . . .

Ward: Yes, I know Lee was there -

LG: Yes, definitely. As a matter of fact, Lee was responsible for drafting most of the resolutions during the convention. Kathryn Lewis was there;

LG: you might recall that the apartment had those bookcases that were right under the windows, and Kathryn -

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Ward: We were talking about the party and Kathryn Lewis; she had some champagne.

LG: Yes, and she was sitting on these bookshelves. Luckily, nothing happened.

Ward: No books were lost?

LG: No. But the '39 convention was a good convention; it had a lot of spark to it. By 1939 people like Dubinsky had begun to move out of the CIO. The 1940 convention I recall distinctly; that was back in Atlantic City. I think it was in 1940 or '41, Lewis resigned as president of the CIO and Phil (Philip) Murray took over. That was the turning point in the CIO when he (Lewis) stepped down. I recall a large scale campaign by many of us to persuade him to stay. He supported Willkie in the 1940 campaign. When the CIO did not go all out in supporting Willkie, he decided he'd been repudiated. A number of us were up night after night to find ways and means to try to persuade him. But nothing worked.

He was very cordial about the whole thing; I remember one night a number of us were sitting around in one corner of the lobby and Lewis came over to say "Hello" to all of us; sat down and regaled us with all kinds of stories from the coal mines, and some of his jokes. He was a great raconteur as well as a great speaker.

But he wouldn't even broach the subject of staying and there was no use broaching it with him. He had made up his mind. It was a sad day. A number of us began to feel that things were going to change. I left the State Council by the end of 1941 . . .

Ward: How did that transfer take place? What initiated it?

LG: Well, I initiated it myself. I felt that the council was set up; no question about that; also that councils have a certain inborn limitation. The way your councils are set up in the labor movement, the amount of authority they have is almost zero.

People keep talking about someone like Meany, (George Meany, former president of the A F of L); on a national scale it is true that the A F of L heads pre-empted some areas such as foreign policy. On the other hand, the individual unions within that council have an enormous amount of autonomy when it comes to their bargaining. You can't tamper with their contracts. You can't walk in there and tell them what to do. Once in a while it overlaps - when you get into periods of the War Labor Board or the Pay Board.

The principal role you play is that of a fireman; somebody doesn't call in, there's no fire to answer. The one thing that became apparent to me is that the scope of this job was going to be very limited. I thought I had had enough of that, and I preferred to go back and work for the ILWU.

In 1941 I went to Chicago representing the ILWU, primarily in an attempt to do some organizing there; that was moderately successful. What we didn't realize was that the war brought about many other things so that organizing had a different coloration.

A lot of employers, in order to get workers during the war, were granting voluntary increases. Even where they didn't do that the War Labor Board regulations prevailed and the increases went through the Board; so World War II became a time when most of the newly formed CIO unions got to be entrenched, or grew by accretion.

Ward: Weren't the employers also aware of the fact that the CIO had adopted a no-strike policy during the war?

LG: Sure, so there were certain limitations. While still in the CIO Council we could play a moderate role in the pursuit of the war effort. I recall going back to Washington, D. C. for a luncheon called by Eleanor Roosevelt (wife of President Roosevelt). It was around the business of supporting the war effort. Other than the time I went down to see Pierre Salinger (press secretary to President John F. Kennedy), this was the only time I was in the White House. But I much preferred to go back to the ILWU, which I had really never left.

Ward: I see. And did you approach Harry about it?

LG: Yes, I talked to Harry about the thing and to Bob Robertson.

Ward: And they were agreeable?

LG: Oh, sure. That was the time Merv Rathborne became the secretary of the State CIC.

Ward: Yes. Well, now, there was a convention at which you got elected? When and where?

LG: Oh, that didn't happen until 1943. I was back in Chicago about six or seven months, maybe a little more. Terry and I were living with her sister on the Southside, down near Gary, Indiana. I recall they were spending the summer out there while I was staying in town and plugging away on some of these organizational things. We had organized a large group of paper, scrap metal houses, primarily black, and we weren't doing so badly.

Ward: Well, then at that time you were working as an organizer for the ILWU?

LG: Right. Then I moved on to New York City. Again, with the same objective in mind; we still had hopes that we could put together a national organization. We had locals all around - New Orleans, Minneapolis, Chicago, Cleveland. In New York the warehousemen were in a group called District 65.

LG: We worked out of their building for a while and we were hoping that that might be a natural alliance. They were part of the Retail, Wholesale and Distribution Workers. (Samuel) Wolchok was the man who was the head of that . . . He was really quite hopeless, particularly when it came to the ILWU. I think he felt that in any lash-up with the ILWU, he'd never survive, and he was right. He was pretty much a business-type trade unionist.

Eventually, District 65 split with him, too. We were also having some jurisdictional hearings in Washington, D. C. with Wolchok claiming all the warehouses. I remember going before the CIO Executive Council and arguing on the question of warehouse jurisdiction and getting some pretty good support. Not only the leftwing unions but Allan Heywood (CIO official) supported us; John Brophy (also in CIO leadership) did; Brophy was very fond of our outfit, and Kathryn Lewis was very friendly to us. I used to stop by and talk to her all the time, so we got certain help from that direction.

It was during the period when I was in New York that it was obvious that the war effort had to take precedence. I met a number of people who were with - what do you call it? The O.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services)? These were civilians. It was one of the war organizations, and they were telling me of the back-up of supplies in Espiritu Santos - places like the north coast of Africa.

I began to work with Elinor Kahn (a prominent labor researcher) back there on a war shipping report; a series of recommendations on how the whole flow of supplies could be expedited. The basic idea was that we could take ILWU men, key guys - naturally we would expect them to be paid whatever they were paid at present - ship them to such places and have them supervise the discharge of the ships.

The idea was really implemented by the navy through the Sea Bees (construction workers); they became basically the same thing.

LG: In working on this report I also got the cooperation of Joe Curran (president of the National Maritime Union). Of course, I knew Blackie (Frederick M.) Myers and some of the other men of the NMU.

Later on, I took this report down to Washington where we had an office. I believe that Bjorne Halling (a prominent longshoreman) or Harriet Bouslog was in charge. She was an attorney licensed to practice in Hawaii. Harriet went back to Hawaii in 1946, several years later.

In Washington we had a whole series of meetings on our report. I remember meeting with Lew (Lewis Douglas of the War Shipping Administration) Douglas, (James V.) Forrestal, (Secretary of Defense); (Assistant Secretary of War John J.) McCloy, I think, of the Army. Finally we set up a meeting with (Rear) Admiral (Emory) Land and got copies of the report to him. He had read them apparently. Joe Curran was there at that meeting.

Admiral Land's reaction was very quick. He said, "Maybe you can or can't help on getting these supplies moving, but basically what you're trying to do is change all the work standards in every one of these countries where the shipping is going." He was convinced that was our only purpose.

Later on, people who wanted to get the job done did begin to recruit a number of our longshoremen to help out. I remember members like Sailor McCloskey from Los Angeles, Phil Sandeen, then president of Local 10; guys like L. B. Thomas, Charlie Ross - they were all part of the navy, or going as civilians to various places.

Ward: Well, that brings us around to your situation - you weren't drafted? Or were you?

LG: No, I wasn't drafted.

Ward: How come?

LG: I filed with the draft board just like everybody else did; it was on Polk Street, the North Beach draft board. I never applied for a deferment. I got the funny feeling that they didn't want me any more than I wanted them, because there was a sort of an ugly confrontation. I was called down to the draft board; they were classifying people and they wanted to know what I did. I told them I was a trade unionist and what we were doing.

They said, "That's not essential for the war effort." "Well, you feel as you please," I said, "We feel pretty keenly about the war, and by the way I don't remember ever seeing you on any of those picket lines when we refused to ship scrap iron to Japan." Well, he just blew. After the hearing, one of the draft board members walked out with me and said, "Don't let this guy disturb you; he's got a kid overseas and got a report he's hurt." So, nothing came of this.

Ward: You never got a call?

LG: No. Never got a call.

Ward: Because you were within the age limit?

LG: Oh, yeah. I was within the age limit. This was in 1941 and I was 31 years old. I wasn't about to volunteer. True, we had one child by then. That might have made a difference.

Ward: Okay, that answers that question. Now, after this organizing and this work on the logistics problem, there was a convention in '43 in which you became the secretary of the ILWU, the secretary-treasurer?

LG: Yes, I came back to the west coast. Gene Paton was then secretary of the ILWU, but he decided in 1943 that he was going to enlist in the army. Gene had a number of problems of his own - rough problems. Later when we tried to find out as much as we could what had happened to Gene during the war, some of the guys in his company that we ran down said that he was almost like a

LG: man with a death wish. Paton was one of those rare characters; he must have been promoted to sergeant three or four times, or some other rank, and then always got busted. I got a call from Paton when he was stationed out at the (San Francisco) Presidio for a while. He said, "I'd like to see you this evening; let's have a bite to eat and a few drinks." So, we go out, we're having dinner together, and a few drinks.

So I said, "What time are you due back? It's after midnight now." He says, "Yeah, I know that, but I know what I'm doing." I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "Well, we have a guy in charge here; his idea of getting even with somebody is to send him overseas, and I'm sick and tired of sitting around here. And if I can bust the rules one more time, I think I'll go."

Sure enough, within a week or so he was on his way. By that time, I think he had been busted down to private; he won a battle-field commission to captain. Most of the officers in his company had been killed. Pat was quite a guy, really a son of the people. Had a wonderful flair to him. Understood the rank and file. A very courageous guy; also had his problems.

He was married to Virginia Woods, who had been my secretary when I was up here with the CIO. I had known her in Los Angeles; she graduated cum laude at UCLA.

Ward: She's a brilliant mathematician.

LG: Yes. She and Pat got hitched; I guess it was during the war. But Pat also had some drinking problems.

Ward: Yes, he was a heavy drinker.

LG: I remember getting him to go out to see a Doctor (Norman) Ryder - I guess he's considered to be the best analyst in San Francisco. Pat said, "What the hell's the good of me seeing a head-shrinker?" I said, "Look, the way you've

LG: been going, you've got to be doing yourself an awful lot of damage." Ryder was wise enough to have him get some tests, and Pat was told that he had some brain damage.

Ryder decided very quickly that one thing a psychiatrist can't do successfully is treat alcoholics. Pat's attitude for example . . . I guess Norman Ryder thought that maybe it would frighten him into stopping drinking. We were sitting around talking about it and he said, "Oh, what the hell, so what? Still, with half a brain, I'm a lot smarter than most of these employers."

I came back because he decided to go into the army, and I became secretary. It might have been an interim appointment just before he left, and then I was elected in 1943.

V EFFECTS OF THE WAR

First Mention Of Hawaii

Ward: Okay. Now, how long had the Longshore local been organized in Hawaii?

LG: The Longshore local in Hawaii initially had been organized at the end of the 1934 strike and the beginning of 1935. The first group that organized down there was in the port of Hilo. Honolulu came later, and the other outlying ports like Port Allen, now Wawiliwili. These were on the island of Kauai; at Kahalui - that was on the island of Maui.

I think that in addition to the Hilo longshoremen, there might have been a small group up at Kukuihaole - that's where they loaded ships on a high line - bags of sugar. They might have been a part of the Hilo local. They had begun to organize in 1935 but they were having damn little success getting any kind of a contract from the employers, or recognition.

They had gone through a nasty strike in 1938. It was the Inter-island strike; the Inlandboatmen's Union had struck and the employers ran a shipment to Hilo. The longshoremen and their wives were down there. It was more of a picnic atmosphere than anything else, apparently. They weren't going to work the ship and were there to dissuade anybody else from doing it. The local constabulary opened fire on them and a lot of them were injured.

Ward: No deaths?

LG: No - nobody got killed. One of the guys who went to work for us later on, Bert Nakano, had been in that same beef. He had part of his heel shot off, so that he always walked with a limp from then on. The leader of that group was a fine, competent man - Harry Komoko. He continued with the union until some years later, when he married a girl who worked for our union and then they moved to Monterey. She was determined that Harry (Komoko) get out of the union scene, which is a little bit sad.

Most of the leaders of the longshoremen in the '30's there, '34 and the early part of '35 were Hawaiian; guys like Freddy Kamahoahoa, who was built almost like a kamehameha I mean - one of the strongest men the world had ever -

Ward: Is he the guy who picked you up (pointing to a nearby wall) in that picture?

LG: No - in that picture? No, that's a woman . . .

Ward: A woman picked you up?

LG: Yeah, Blossom something or other. She's not a small woman, but she figured it would be a great gag. Then Benny Big Nose Kahaawini - he was one of the leaders there.

Ward: Well, these guys - their main problem was trying to get wage parity with the west coast, wasn't it?

LG: Oh, yes. Their main problem at first was just to get recognition in the contract, and they didn't have much luck. In Hilo they finally were well enough established so that they had some sort of an informal understanding, or maybe even an agreement, but in Honolulu the employers just opposed organization constantly.

Finally we did win an NLRB election. That was around 1940 or '41, but never really got around to getting a contract; the war came along and the military promptly took over.

LG: Martial law was imposed and the people in charge of martial law on the docks were the same shipowners.

It wasn't until the tail end of the war that we really began to rebuild the longshoremen, though they stayed pretty well together during the war. Jack Kawano who was president at the time, served in some sort of a minor capacity working for the government. He was also doing part-time farming, so my hunch is that we did not have too much going for us.

Later on when we began to study the whole thing, we found the island economy was such that longshore played a different role than it does in most parts of the country; at least it did in terms of the industrial control there by the Big Five. Longshore is a specific industry in the mainland. In some cases however, you find longshore shipping tied back into bigger corporations. Reynolds Tobacco runs some big ships. Some outfits have been tied in to trucking.

Hawaii was different. In Hawaii, longshore was really an economic off-shoot of the principal industries there, pineapple and sugar. Pineapple and sugar would determine what, if anything, would be shipped out of there.

Each of the Big Five controlled certain shipping operations. At the time we organized Matson (Navigation Company) it was owned by the Big Five, which determined Matson's policy. Alexander and Baldwin, for example, controlled the shipping and the port in Maui - Kahalui - because A & B is the biggest agency on that island. American Factors controlled the longshoring in Port Allen and Nawiliwili on the island of Kauai; they are also a big sugar producer there.

C. Brewer, the biggest sugar producer on the island of Hawaii, the Big Island, controls the waterfront there. Castle and Cooke, which at one time was the biggest sugar producer on the island of Oahu, still own Wailua Sugar Company;

LG: they also had another plantation which has since merged with Oahu Sugar Company. They are the ones who are the principal stevedoring company in the port of Honolulu, servicing Matson ships, as well as other ships.

There is an independent contractor, McCabe Hamilton and Renney which was a local operation hanging on by its teeth, doing primarily army and navy work and once in a while catching a ship that did not belong to Matson.

So, after I became secretary, one of the things I was really interested in was that we had these locals to which charters had been issued . . . .

Ward: What do you mean, there had been charters issued?

LG: The Hilo longshoremen had an ILWU charter. The Oahu longshoremen had an ILWU charter.

Ward: Oh, I see.

LG: And there had been a union in Port Allen. As a matter of fact, they once had a six or eight month strike in 1940, a strike which was broken. One of the rank and file leaders is still around; he came from Port Allen. As a matter of fact, the leader of the Port Allen strike was Jack Hall (who was to become ILWU regional director) -

Ward: Oh, then he was a natural in the Islands?

LG: Jack Hall had gone to sea. He took part in the '34 strike. In the '36 strike, he got off the ship in Honolulu and that's where he settled. He constantly tried to form a union down there, had a small paper called the Voice of Labor. Now they have an Island paper put out by the ILWU called the Voice of the ILWU. They were attempting to organize in places like Port Allen.

Marcus Hyashida is the other guy who was in Port Allen. I think Jack Hall actually got a contract in one of the sugar plantations, McBride, on the island of Kauai. It didn't last very long but that was a contract, I think, in the name of the old UCAPAWA (United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America).

Ward: Really? Agricultural workers?

LG: Jack spent all of his time on just one thing - trying to organize. Jack would recall how he got by in those days; he would wait until another seaman would come in, a live one, and get a couple of bucks. He'd buy meals, or he'd go down and get some fish and poi, flop almost any place in downtown Honolulu. What did he do about washing his clothes? Oh, he'd just dive in the ocean, swim around for a while. (laughter) Apparently he led a pretty rugged life, but not all that unpleasant; he liked it.

But when the war came along, all that changed. Organization stopped dead in its tracks. When I became secretary, one of the things I did was to start going over the whole structure of the union; what we had chartered, where it stood. I spent a lot of time going up and down the coast, visiting the various ports; generally took the executive board member of that area along with me, like Frank Andrews from Olympia, a guy they used to call "Bull of the Woods".

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(Interview 11: 25 April, 1978)

More About the California CIO

Ward: All right, Lou, you want to go back into your days as secretary with the State CIO Council; the first thing would be I guess, the North American strike.

LG: There were three things that I did during the time spent with the State CIO as secretary in addition to the items I already mentioned, and in addition to being the head of Labor's Non-Partisan League, which sort of automatically came with the title.

One was the role of the California CIO Council in the North American (aircraft factory) strike. Another was the attempt to organize the workers in Hollywood on an industrial basis, led primarily by

LG: Jeff Kibre and supported by the State CIO, in an organization called the USTG - that was the United Studio Technicians Guild. The third was my appearance at the Tolan Committee in reference to the evacuation of the Japanese from the west coast.

Ward: That was Congressman John Tolan, wasn't it?

LG: John Tolan, yes, I believe he came from the East Bay. Those hearings took place just prior to the evacuation, I believe around March 1942. He conducted those hearings up and down the Coast.

Well, let me try to cover these things one at a time. The USTG with Jeff Kibre and the North American strike were pretty much in the same time frame. The USTG was initiated by Jeff somewhere around 1938 or the early part of 1939. It was an attempt to use the National Labor Relations Board for an industrial election in the studios.

We helped support it and put some money into the thing; also Jeff managed to get a considerable amount of help from rank and filers and people around Hollywood. There was still a strong progressive group around Hollywood. Remember, the studios were broken up into dozens of craft unions.

My father worked in the studios, a member of the Carpenters. One of my brothers, Sam, worked in the labs there, particularly the Fox Technicolor lab; I think he was a member of the IATSE, (International Association of Theatrical and Stage Employees). A brother-in-law, John Vigoreaux, married to my sister, worked in Hollywood, primarily as a painter. He belonged to still a separate local. I had another brother, Saul, who is dead now; he had also worked around the studios. All of them, of course, were of a progressive bent.

One of the things that was most obvious was that some sort of an industrial union in Hollywood would make a great deal more sense than the crazy craft structure and pecking order they had there. Jeff put together a perfectly sound approach to the issue. He understood the nature of the craft unions and the importance of getting a broad cross-section of representation.

LG: He had a number of people who ranged all the way from electricians to grips to carpenters. One of the groups there was under progressive direction and supported the USTG; that was Herb Sorrell with the Painters' Union. It was during that campaign that the IATSE suddenly came to life again; it is made up of a whole series of craft organizations. They have the motion picture operators in San Francisco -

Ward: They were a scandal-ridden union too, weren't they?

LG: The union had been taken over by two men, one of them named Willie Bioff and the other by the name of Brown. The man with the muscle who really ran the thing was Willie Bioff. Later on it was found he had all kinds of connections with mobsters in Chicago and that area.

We're skipping a little bit, but what finally happened was that Bioff made a deal with Joe Schenck (a motion picture mogul). I forget which of the large studios he was mixed up with, whether it was Paramount . . . .

Ward: MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), I think.

LG: MGM, yes. Joe Schenck did time on that. It was a back door deal made by Schenck with Bioff and Brown to bring the IATSE back in; Hollywood was pretty well disorganized from the depression time on.

The sentiment around Hollywood was for a union, no question about that; but as to whether the IATSE, with its craft appeal, would have the strength or not was another thing. I am still convinced to this day that had there been a completely fair shake on the election, I think that the USTG would have won.

Ward: Would that have been industry-wide or studio by studio?

LG: I think it was industry-wide. The election, however, was held at the old Gilmore Stadium. I did not know until afterwards that the Stadium was not within the city of Los Angeles. It was part of the

LG: county, with some sort of a different relationship towards the police force. I am convinced that the election was held there under pressure from the employers and from the IATSE.

That's where a lot of heavy-handed guys were used, within a block, a half a block, of the election polls. Some of the good guys were literally dumped. My brother, Sam, got beaten up during that election.

This was Bioff's technique. Bioff later wound up in Las Vegas, I believe. Some years later he stepped on the starter of his car, and they haven't found him or any part of the car since. So, USTG was dumped - they got beaten in the election.

Ward: Did you have anything to do with Walt Disney?

LG: No, that was later on; you're thinking of . . .

Ward: The strike in '41.

LG: There was a strike later on by the cartoonists - they had a Cartoonists' Guild. There was a Screen Actors' Guild, Screen Writers' Guild, Screen Directors' - there were a lot of guilds, as distinguished from unions. Jeff's idea was that the whole pecking order in Hollywood was such that people thought of themselves as guildsmen rather than trade unionists.

I don't believe the Cartoonists were part of the USTG, but they were a progressive union. They were led by some awfully good people. Disney had really put the whole cartoon business on a chain line; it was no different than a belt line in an automobile plan.

The way the thing was broken down, photographing a cartoon was simply going over all these drawings, done by the cartoonists. It was a belt line business. Disney broke their back, you remember.

Ward: What did you do to help the USTG?

LG: We helped financially, met with some people I still knew from the old days. I helped with some of the literature, but primarily feeding a few bucks in there, not a great deal.

Ward: There wasn't that much money?

LG: Not much money; you rarely saw it. A lot of things were "do it yourself". Nobody was terribly upset if you wrote up a leaflet, typed up the stencil, did the mimeographing, and then took it out and distributed it the next morning.

Not too different from what had happened in Warehouse. We thought it was an enormous step forward when we managed to hire a part-time stenographer. We'd always find people who could do things. I recall the IATSE putting out some literature to the effect that the USTG was being supported by the CIO and that the Secretary of the State CIC, myself, was in L.A. living in a second class hotel, the Royal Palms. To the IATSE, the important thing there was the second class hotel. That's the way they thought.

That election failed. The net result, while some of it was bad in the sense of bringing guys like Bioff and Brown into the picture, was that the unions were revived. My family was mixed up in the USTG. People like my brother supported it ardently; there was none of the family blacklisted at that time.

Later on in the 40s you had the big movement led by Herb Sorrell, an attempt to put together the motion picture crafts around a progressive program. When those strikes were broken you began to see the beginning of a real blacklist around Hollywood which, by the way, is one of the reasons why one of my brothers, Sam, takes the name of Gilbert. He was blacklisted out of Hollywood; this was around '46 - '47 . . . .

Ward: Sam? Saul took the name of Gilbert -

LG: Saul and Sam took the name Gilbert - they both did - because of the blacklisting in the studios. Sam had to start from scratch. Here he was a hell of a good technician. He had become head of the night lab at Fox Technicolor, pretty responsible job.

LG: He had gone with my dad to the Soviet Union in 1937 or thereabouts. Around 1936, my dad and my brother were offered jobs in the Soviet Union, where they were setting up their motion picture industry. They wanted them there primarily in conjunction with set construction, something in which my dad was really good. My brother went along with him and they spent approximately a year there under regular contract with the Soviet government; monthly checks to support the family.

During the period they were there my sister visited them. She was over in France and spent a short time in the Soviet Union. Incidentally, to this day Sam speaks good Russian. He got to be just as good as my father.

As a matter of fact, when there was a delegation of Russians that came by the International (ILWU office) three or four months ago my brother happened to be up here and he came by; he was just chattering away with them in Russian. He was interested in getting a UCLA basketball team to visit the Soviet Union for some exhibition games. This was just recently. As a matter of fact, he and my sister-in-law, Rose, chaperoned a U. S. volleyball team over to Poland a couple of years ago.

Ward: Rose would be Sam's wife?

LG: Yes. His first wife, Punny, died of cancer some years ago. Sam and Rose sponsored this girls' volleyball team and they came back with some rather amusing stories. Apparently, the girls did fairly well except that they played some of the teams there which were actually slightly higher grade; they were something closer to college.

This was a high school team, so that they didn't fare so well. My brother complained that the competition at least should have been on approximately the same level. He told a rather humorous story about an incident in Poland. Apparently, some guy had too much to drink and was at the same hotel where these girls were staying. He decided that he was in love with some girl from the volleyball team and he followed her and tried to break into the room where this girl was staying.

LG: Finally, the gals got together and they didn't hurt him physically, but they put him down and said, "Let's teach him a lesson." They stripped him of all his clothes, and there he was, bare-assed naked in the corridor of the hotel.

The security guard came up and wanted to file charges and haul the guy off to prison. He was terribly disturbed; you just don't do this to foreign visitors, you don't act this way. The girls told the guard, "Look, leave him alone. He's been punished enough."

Sam was trying to do some of the same thing in the way of a college basketball team; they had been having a lot of these preliminaries to the Olympics. That was the reason he was up here and was talking to some of the people who were part of this Russian delegation.

Anyway, the USTG just didn't make it. I had met Jeff at UCLA, but he was in a completely different circle of people than many of us. He was very active on the school paper and he did all the sports - was one of the editors of the paper. He was considered a bit of a wheel around campus.

I might mention that Jeff and his family had been attached to the studios for many years, too. They used to make what are called "miniatures". When you see one of these big airplane disasters, like the Hindenburg going up in flames, these are done in miniature; when they are photographed, they look big and real.

Ward: They were technicians, then.

LG: Technicians; all these miniatures had to be built according to scale, painstaking and time-consuming work, highly skilled. So, this family had a long history of connections with the motion picture industry, just the way mine did.

But at UCLA he was not any part of this left-wing circle of youngsters. But after he got started with the USTG, with the experience he picked up there, he decided to stay with the trade union movement.

LG: He later became head of the United Fishermen's Union; the awesome power of the U. S. government put that union out of business by declaring the efforts on the part of the fishermen to negotiate a decent price for their catch, instead of being taken to the cleaners by people like Paladini (A. Paladini Seafood Company) and others, was a conspiracy in restraint of trade; that they were price-fixing.

Thurgood Marshall (prosecuting for the U. S. Justice Department) pressed the charges against them and the great victory he won was to destroy this little union trying to get a couple of cents for their days out there on the high seas. The places where the union held on was in those areas where you had the larger fishing boats like the tuna fleet; there the men worked on shares and you could negotiate the question of shares, rather than the price of fish.

The North American strike took place around mid-1941.

Ward: Early June, '41.

LG: That's about right, I guess. The situation by that time internationally was beginning to change. The U.S. was already into making heavy supplies for the British and I think we were supporting some of the armies in exile, like the French, as well. The whole posture of the administration - they didn't call them "war plants", they were "defense plants". Then, there were groups working out of London, like the Dutch seamen.

Ward: Poles?

LG: Yes, people who had not gone along with the capitulation of Leopold (King of Belgium). The feeling on the part of most progressives, at least when the war broke, was that in many ways this was just another imperialist war. Things people like myself were very conscious of were efforts on the part of the Soviet Union, and Litvinoff particularly, to set up collective security pacts; attempts to reach agreement with the French and the British to try to stop Hitler before the wave really took over.

LG: We all remember Chamberlain and "peace in our time." There was also the feeling that the Russians were left with no alternative. I'll admit that things like the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement were awfully hard to handle, although there again it fell within the same set of conclusions; all the efforts on the part of the major powers - particularly the British, who dominated foreign policy, at least in the European end of things - were directed towards appeasement; doing nothing to stop Hitler.

It didn't in any way diminish our feelings about Hitler; everything from the boycott of Nazi goods; the picket line around the Karlsruhe when it visited in San Francisco; the resolutions that had been adopted against Hitler, the whole feeling we had about fascism.

In retrospect, I think we over-emphasized some of these developments and failed to see the broader picture, particularly the extent of Hitler's appetite. Basically I think where we were mistaken was where we failed to measure certain deep-seated democratic feelings in countries like England, which were simply not going to break in a situation like that.

When the North American strike broke, I remember being in San Francisco and getting a call on the thing. It hit the headlines very quickly; Roosevelt called the army out against the strikers.

I remember heading down there almost at once and meeting with Dick Frankenstein; he was one of the officers in the United Automobile Workers. At that time I think he was in charge of the Aircraft Division; he was an effective guy. He had been a side-kick of Walter Reuther (president of the UAW at that time) for many years; was one of the guys who was beaten up by Henry Ford's (founder of the Ford Motor Company) goons.

Frankstein was a tough egg though, a strong guy and had a lot of guts. He was at the Biltmore Hotel (in Los Angeles), and I went by to see him. First thing I did was to make it plain to him - on that score I was also relaying Harry's message -

LG: that we couldn't see the strike as a winner; any attempt to take on the U. S. Army was just insane, wouldn't work and ought to be called off. The main issue there was an attempt to get something like two-bits an hour increase in pay -

Ward: They were getting 50 cents and were asking for 75 cents.

LG: That was probably the minimum wage.

Ward: Yes, it was.

LG: Anyway, the session with Frankenstein was wholesome. On the one hand he was very much in support of the workers; on the other hand, as a trade unionist he knew perfectly well that they were heading for disaster. It would be the kind of strike that would completely unravel; and if you let the thing unravel to that degree, then you would take another risk, namely, that a group of guys who were going to hang out to the end would be the ones to be victimized.

They are the best trade unionists, generally the best leadership material inside the plants, and they are the ones who get it in the neck. It is one way that employers manage to behead effective unions in some of the big plants. After this session, I remember going down and talking to (Philip) Slim Connelly and Michener -

Ward: Lew Michener.

LG: The head of the Automobile Workers down there at the time. I said, "Look, this thing ain't going to work, that's all." They knew it too, but nobody wanted to say it; that was the problem. It's understandable, in every beef and in every strike. The best trade unionists are the most reluctant to say, "Fellows, it's time to back up."

It is the responsibility of a trade unionist; if he is not prepared to take it on, he has no business being there. If the only job is leading the charge and carrying the banner with the martial music playing, hire some majorettes and some drummer boys; you don't need any trade union officials or any leadership material.

LG: There was general agreement that something ought to be done. I remember going out the next morning early to the North American plant -

Ward: Did you go to the beanfield meeting where Frankenstein spoke? And was booed down?

LG: No, I was not there. I know that he was booed down. It was the next morning that I was out there. I remember having parked the car about a mile away from where the union headquarters were, because the streets were blocked off by the army, and walking the rest of the distance. They didn't stop you or ask any questions.

I went to the union headquarters. I was on the phone to people primarily like Slim Connelly; I was talking to San Francisco, keeping Harry advised. I was talking to a number of local people; at a stage like that you are reaching for almost anybody - the National Labor Relations Board, people you know, what-have-you, to see if something could be done. Call a stand-off on the thing.

I'd been on the phone, for about an hour and a half, and I got off and suddenly realized that the office was empty. I looked outside; we were completely surrounded by the troops. They just decided that when this guy gets through, we're just walking in there, too.

So, I managed to get the leadership of the local (CIO) Council. We figured the only thing to do was to call a meeting at the CIO headquarters. The meeting was too big to hold inside.

Ward: That was the following morning - it was a Tuesday?

LG: Right. There were several thousand people there - what we did was rig up loudspeakers and took over the whole back street behind Avalon Blvd. The job pretty well fell on me to break the news that there was no daylight in sight; it would be just a question of time before the army took the strike apart; guys would start drifting back to work.

Then those who were good and solid would probably finally be victimized, and it would be a double loss. The only thing to do was to go back to work, and to go back intact.

Ward: Well, the army had dispersed the picket line the day before.

LG: Yes, they had dispersed the picket line, but had not started a major back to work movement - a big difference. I'm sure, had the strike gone on even another 24 hours, the announcement would have been made by the army or the company, or by both, - saying anybody who wants to get back to work would be completely protected, etc. etc. - the usual crap.

Later on, it had a peculiar windfall for us. I'm not sure if it was an un-American Activities Committee hearing, or some (other) Congressional hearing, or one of Harry's trials, where Frankenstein was questioned about the 1941 North American strike.

One of the traditional enemies in Congress decided to hang this one on Harry. Frankenstein said that exactly the opposite was true, that I had been down there, that I had talked to him and that I had been in touch with Harry and that our position was to call it off.

Bear in mind that we're still talking about a period when the harassment of Harry and attempts to get him deported were on full blast. It did peter out during the war, but at that time the war was not on. Frankenstein turned out to be a very stand-up guy. Anyway, that's where the North American strike ended. Shortly thereafter the Nazis turned against the Russians.

Ward: The 22nd (of June) just a few days after the strike.

LG: A few days afterward. From that point on there were all kinds from Socialists to Social Democrats, attacking the left on the grounds that the moment the Russians were attacked, why then . . . .

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Ward: We were talking about Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union on June 22 and the changes in policy.

LG: We made up for our mistakes pretty rapidly. It was a loyal and devoted group that pitched in to help the war effort. The whole orientation of the

LG: trade union movement and of everybody in the country changed. It changed to a large degree in June. Then it completely changed in December when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

Doubters were still around; the only one from whom I've never gotten a firm opinion - just my own reluctance to ask the question - was John L. Lewis. John L. Lewis remained opposed to the war even after June - I know that. To what degree he changed his position after Pearl Harbor, I'm not sure. And Lewis still had this very hostile attitude towards Roosevelt -

Ward: And also against the British.

LG: He never trusted the British.

Ward: Perfidious Albion.

LG: Yep. Later he saw nothing wrong in pulling the coal miners out, because they had some things coming to them.

Ward: Even though the progressive element which he had once headed was aghast at that strike.

LG: They were aghast at it. Harry issued a statement which, I'm sure, he regretted the rest of his life, that Lewis was in effect aiding the enemy. Lewis didn't see it that way. He was helping his own people.

Concentration Camps for Japanese

LG: That covers two of those items I wanted to talk about. The third has to do with the Tolan Committee. After Pearl Harbor we had the headlines and newspaper stories, inventions and fabrications, the lies, the unbelievable bullshit that went on about the Japanese.

It was a weird period, actually insane; somebody with a bellyful of rock-gut would sight Japanese submarines and that would make a headline. Some

LG: reporter doesn't have anything else to do in Hawaii so, he writes a story on how the sugar workers cut the cane in such a way so that they made arrows pointing to Pearl Harbor; as though the Japanese didn't know where it was!

All kinds of things were going on about the huge Japanese menace, these people who were pledged to the Emperor. No question but that the Japanese as a group made a very distinct effort to maintain their own language and culture. You didn't expect them to adopt the white man's culture in Hawaii; they were there as contract laborers.

Ward: They were economically unpopular, too.

LG: There was a background, particularly on the West Coast, of hostility toward all Oriental laborers. It started off not against the Japanese but against the Chinese, who were brought here to help build the railroads and to do some of the dirty work that they couldn't get anybody else to do.

During one of those periods of economic crises one of the groups that helped to launch this anti-Oriental campaign that resulted in the Oriental Exclusion Act was the American labor movement; particularly the San Francisco labor movement. It's not a happy chapter in Jack London's life. Jack London was active in the San Francisco Labor Council. He was a very outspoken -

Ward: He voted against the Yellow Peril (an anti-Oriental phrase of those times).

LG: Yes, he voted against the Yellow Peril. As a matter of fact, there are other things that Jack London did that were pretty well screwed up - the time they got him to cover the American invasion of Mexico; Vera Cruz. He wrote about the great heroes who were taking over Mexico as opposed to the Carranza government.

Then there was the Oriental Exclusion Act. That did a couple of things. People like the Issei, born abroad, had great difficulty or couldn't become American citizens - I'm not quite sure which it was. Their children born in this country were

LG: citizens by birth, but under the Oriental Exclusion Act there were no further admittances of Chinese or any other Orientals.

The balance of the hostility against the Japanese was a direct outcome of the Hearst press and the McClatchy press (a powerful factor in California's agricultural regions). Their constant perorations against the Japanese and the yellow menace had gone on for years.

True, very few people replied to it, because there was no editorial opinion coming from other sources saying, "Look, you're full of beans - none of this stuff is true."

The Japanese lived among themselves and by themselves. That was understandable; then, of course, you had plain, simple capitalist greed. Japanese had taken land which had been marginal and didn't lend itself to easy, mechanized agriculture; things of that sort.

They were the ones who by plain hard, stoop, sweat labor had made that land profitable. I'm talking about particularly that whole coastal section - Half Moon Bay clear down to Santa Cruz; it was the Japanese, primarily, who were raising the produce there for the American people.

Ward: They were hard-working and very frugal.

LG: Yes. And they knew what it meant to sacrifice. The Japanese were part of the fishing fleet out of San Pedro. Well, under the Oriental Exclusion Act, Japanese were not permitted to own boats, what were considered deep sea boats. The action taken against the Japanese included "libeling" these boats. That's a legal term.

By libeling a boat, it was, in effect, attached on the grounds that while the boat was ostensibly in the names of the children or even in the name of Van Camp Co., they were actually owned by the Issei, foreign-born Japanese. The economic vultures moved in from every direction. This was some of the background.

LG: With Pearl Harbor, the public got all the images of the sneaky Japanese stabbing you in the back; the inscrutable Orientals with their evasive foreign policy; the kamikazes and their adherence to the Emperor.

That's the sort of thing you could write in a bar-room and it didn't take a great deal of work. The net result was General (John L.) DeWitt's reaction, and the President's, that the only thing to do was to evacuate all the Japanese from the west coast, a sensitive area.

Terry and I went down to Manzanar this last weekend. It was primarily a pilgrimage; also it was a celebration honoring some of their old friends who had taken a stand against the Japanese evacuation. I was asked down.

But later on Roosevelt appointed a man who was in charge of the War Relocation Authority, a man named Dillon Myer. He was really an outstanding man who did everything humanly possible to abolish those camps; to get the people out of the camps; get jobs in places like Salt Lake, Chicago; you name it. He couldn't get them back to the west coast; he knew that. Roosevelt by that time might have decided it was all a mistake. That is some of the background.

I was still secretary of the State CIO at the time and when the Tolan Committee came to San Francisco I decided I would testify against the evacuation. It was just a gut feeling that you don't kick people around. If there were any enemy aliens among them, they'd find just as many Germans in Yorktown - that part of New York City where the Nazis used to hang out - as they'd find among the Japanese.

As to where the Italians stood, I doubt if any of them thought much of Mussolini. Perhaps the most they knew about him was that he made the trains run on time, because he kept saying so. Anyway, it's a fact that there was this wholesale dragnet against all the Japanese, uprooting all these people, destroying their life-work on farms . .

Ward: Confiscation of property -

LG: They didn't confiscate their property, exactly. What happened was that the hysteria mounted to a point where some of them made forced sales; of course the vultures were hanging around, including the Associated Farmers, ready to pick it up as quickly as they could.

But when they announced the evacuation, they had these hearings; they were at the old Post Office Building across from the Greyhound on Seventh Street. Anyway, sure, it was an uncomfortable moment going down there to testify. People like Earl Warren (who was to become Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court) had just testified that they had to be moved out of here, that they couldn't be trusted.

Ward: He was attorney-general then.

LG: Right. Jack Shelley (then a State senator) testified against them. (Angelo) Rossi was mayor of San Francisco -

Ward: Yes, he was.

LG: This whole parade of people, all figuring why not get in a couple of political licks against defenseless people. As I remember the hearing, (Congressman John H.) Tolan simply assumed when I got up that I would testify the same way. The hearing room was packed; a lot of Japanese were there. He was pretty much taken aback when I started peeling off -

Ward: Who was?

LG: Congressman Tolan. When I started taking off on the Hearst press, this screaming about the Yellow Peril, the whole attitude we were taking towards these people. I said that it would be a dark chapter in American history; actually the only people who showed any class in the situation were the Japanese. Many of them said, "Maybe there isn't a damn thing we can do about this, but the quicker we can get into the army and defeat the Emperor, the better."

LG: The moment the U. S. Army was opened up and a chance was given to them to volunteer they did so in high percentages. As everybody knows, some of the heaviest casualties suffered in the war were from the men in the 442nd from Hawaii. They handled themselves with a great deal of dignity.

Tolan was not hostile to my testimony. At the end he was very flattering and said, "Well, I'm really glad you are not against me." I wanted to go on with some further testimony quoting some lines from the Statue of Liberty and he said, "You've said enough - you're quite wonderful!" And let it go at that. The testimony got nowhere -

Ward: You did this as an individual? You wouldn't have been asked to testify if you hadn't been secretary of the California CIO Council?

LG: I wasn't asked to testify. People volunteered to testify.

Ward: Oh, I see.

LG: Naturally, of course, your politicos got in the act right away; another headline for them. We might have gotten a communication; I think they advised everybody in an area, like they conducted hearings in other places. In Tacoma they had a hearing because there were Japanese there; places like Los Angeles. As a matter of fact, Al Wirin testified against the internment camps.

I'm not saying I went down there unbeknownst to the executive board of the CIO Council. I talked to most of them on the phone. I remember talking to Harry about the thing, too. The reaction of most of the guys I talked to wasn't one of hostility. They said, "If you feel that keenly about it, go ahead."

Ward: In other words, there was no backlash.

LG: No backlash; nobody said, "Look, you bastard, if you do this, we're going to start a recall." I had a good rapport with the guys and it was very friendly. Their general attitude was "Look, it's your neck, you know." But neither did they volunteer!

Ward: Did you get any backlash from the Communist party?

LG: No, I didn't -

Ward: Although that was not their policy, was it?

LG: I don't think they had a policy in any particular way. The Communist party's policy was all-out support of the war effort. I don't recall the party ever taking a position in favor of the internment camps. I don't recall them taking a position against them, either. I did it on my own; I felt it was the right thing to do.

When I went down to Manzanar this weekend it brought back a lot of memories. There's nothing very comfortable about a hearing of that sort, even though not nearly as uncomfortable as something like an un-American Activities Committee or a (Senator John L.) McClellan hearing, or an (Senator James O.) Eastland Committee hearing, where I had to make appearances.

It's not that bad; but you're facing a hostile atmosphere - no question about that; and a lot of prestigious people, from General DeWitt to Earl Warren and what have you. You take a position which is pretty close to defying the nation. There is always a certain amount of trepidation. You walk into one of these hearings hanging on to your balls and hoping you come out with them intact.

At Manzanar - our neighbor here, (in Mill Valley) Steve Skloot, worked on this motion picture documentary "Farewell to Manzanar". It was an NBC documentary and it's a rather a good job. When he was talking to me about it one day, I said, "Well, I know a little bit about what happened at the time."

I loaned him a book by (Allan R.) Bosworth. I think he called it, "America's Concentration Camps." Bosworth was a commander in the U. S. Navy. I think he was married to a Japanese. He wrote this book after the war and later on at a talk show I was asked to come down there because they were interviewing the author and perhaps I would want to contribute something about what happened during that period.

LG: I got down there all right and Bosworth said, "Gosh, when I read your testimony, I threw my hat in the air." He gave me a copy of his book. He quoted me in great detail; the humorous thing about the talk show was that as these questions came along, Bosworth would defer the questions to me. It was during the beginning of the Vietnam War - or one of those . . . .

Ward: The Korean War?

LG: No, it was later; it was one of the first books written on the thing. Anyway, I loaned this copy to Steve Skloot, my neighbor. He read the thing and gave me a copy of a book, "Farewell to Manzanar," on which this documentary was based. "One question," he said, "how did you happen to do it? Why did you do it?" I asked myself the same question at Manzanar. In retrospect, the thing that bothered me the most is: "Why didn't we all do it?"

The business of the get-together at Manzanar was very impressive. There was a small group of older people, many of them in their eighties; these were people who spent the whole war there, including one guy 88 years old, a stone mason. He had built some new stone entrances to the old Manzanar camp; somebody gave me . . . .

Ward: The plaque is still there.

LG: Right. It took them years to get the plaque put up there. Karl Yoneda (a longshoreman and war veteran) had invited me down there, and he took some photographs. Somebody like myself testifying about this thing is really no big deal, if you measure it against the indignity done the Japanese, the hardships imposed on them, the kind of patience and suffering they were willing to take, including volunteering for things like the strategic services and for combat duty.

People like Karl Yoneda went into the Office of Strategic Services - that was what I was trying to think of when I talked about that study on war shipping. They volunteered at once. Here were Elaine Yoneda - Elaine Black (Yoneda's wife) -

LG: and their four-year old child; he was considered an enemy alien; yes, Tommy. So they wound up in Manzanar; that was the only way to keep the family together.

After Karl went into the service, they wouldn't let her go back to San Francisco! "No," they said, "You can go anywhere else you want;" it took some months before she could go back to San Francisco. I think of what these people went through and of the horrible indignity that this country did to itself.

Actually testifying in one of these things is really small potatoes. What I was really impressed about was that for years the Japanese who suffered through the concentration camps wouldn't even talk about it. But in recent years it's the younger Japanese who decided that they wanted to find out all about it. They are the ones, together with people like Karl Yoneda - who never has forgotten - who really began these pilgrimages to Manzanar.

Karl, in his own quiet way, continued as a longshoreman after the war. He's retired now from longshoring. He had the most effective exhibit at Manzanar; these were things posted around the windows of this Volkswagen Karl has. One of them is called "Jap Hunting License," a poster put out by some guy who was making a buck in San Francisco; "Open Season At All Times." The headlines of a Japanese sabotage ring broken up in Vallejo. All of these, pure fabrications.

All Karl did was put them up. Everybody who came down there stopped by and looked at these things. Here was this small group of older Japanese; I had some chats with them because luckily they got a fairly decent day. They have days down there where the wind blows so hard; it blows off the desert.

Right near Lone Pine - it's pretty barren country, about the first area you get to after a long stretch of desolation around the edges of Mojave. Anyway, there must have been about 500, maybe more, of younger people, most of them in their twenties and barely in their thirties - Japanese youngsters, militant. That is a most encouraging thing.

LG: This was so different from the Japanese-American Citizens League which sprang up at the end of the war. A lot of it was rooted in the old 442nd.* It took the Japanese American Citizens League 25 years to finally get around to asking me to some affair where they gave me some goddam certificate. I have it downstairs somewhere.

Ward: They gave you what?

LG: Some sort of a certificate of honor. I recall one time they were meeting in San Francisco and Harry must have had nothing but mischief in his system that day; he started running down the people who were in charge of the affair. He said, "I think you ought to invite Lou Goldblatt, the secretary-treasurer of the ILWU. He's the one who testified against the evacuation." And they fell all over themselves, but there was no invitation forthcoming.

They were so damn anxious; gee, not just 100% patriotic; 180 proof wouldn't go. They were so determined to become completely assimilated into the capitalist structure. Not so these youngsters: they are learning something which is so important - if they turn their backs on any other people, whether it be blacks in South Africa or people in Chile, or people - the Wilmington Ten - they are just turning their backs on themselves.

Driving back, I couldn't help but think of some of our earlier conversation. You recall that I felt a number of things because of the whole background of my parents and the Jewish tradition.

Ward: Yes.

The Power of Jewish Tradition

LG: It had a specific effect on me; a great deal of an effect. I could understand why my reaction was when somebody asked, "Why did you do it?" I recall some of the things I picked up; I don't think it's any

* A military combat unit in World War II.

LG: accident that over the years you found Jews identified with almost every spin-off movement you could think of, as well as major political movements.

They were not only leading Socialists and leading Communists. They were also leading Vegetarians; they became disciples of Robert Owens, who formed the first communes in America. They were also very strong trade unionists. I recall reading a booklet on the Jewish unions; there used to be Jewish trade unions where the discussions took place in Yiddish.

This guy had the interesting theory that the reasons for the Jews' participation in so many of these revolutionary causes or changing movements or what-have-you was because of a fundamental ethic which he calls Messianic expectancy. This is not new; it's one that is used time and time again and it's not "god's chosen people" at all.

The whole idea of the coming of the Messiah is the dominant theme in Jewish religion, "Next year in Jerusalem," at the end of some of their prayers. Some of them would do everything humanly possible to make sure that they would be buried in the Valley of Gethsemane. The graves there are all jumbled together; this is where the Messiah has to appear.

It also accounts for some of the crazy aberrations among them, like some of these religious Jews who continued in practically a straight line from the Jewish kings; never did leave what is now Israel, particularly Jerusalem. They would not take part in the 1948 struggle for independence. "This can't be the time; the Messiah has to come first."

This is an entirely different concept than what this guy was trying to explain in this book. A Messianic expectancy is that you have to live with a code in your own head so that if the Messiah came tomorrow, you could make an accounting.

Ward: Make a what?

LG: Make an accounting of yourself, which I think explains some of these things. A large number of them are not only non-religious but pretty violently

LG: atheist. There's no contradiction in these things; it's only when people like the Jewish synagogues try to take over the Jewish culture that I get particularly irritated. They've got no property rights.

It's also one of the reasons why my folks and those who thought alike felt that when a group of people like the Jews were in struggle over the years against what they called the disabilities - various forms of discrimination, progroms and what-have-you - that somehow the Jews did not have the same right to be sons-of-bitches that other people have.

It is something that I have carried most of my life. I feel the same way about the Black movement. It's gotten me into some hot water, but it has also made me some very warm friends.

I can understand people who say, "My idea of freedom is to get my share of the action" - period. "I want the right to be just as big a son-of-a-bitch as anybody else - just as big a thief - just as big an exploiter." That's not a fight for freedom; that's simply a primitive form of nationalism. It has nothing to do with revolutionary struggle or with progress.

The worst thing that's happening in Israel right now really goes back to the same thing; the one group in Israel really dedicated to something quite different was the Kibbutz movement, which is a pretty genuine commune, they are self-supporting; they work the land. The whole idea was that they were going to live different lives.

But they have become a smaller and smaller minority in Israel. A type has taken over; what some people in Israel would call "the all rightniks." They are doing all right; "I'm fine, Jack - screw you." There is a fundamental struggle. I don't see any way of reconciling these two things.

The same code applies to other movements, whether they be Black or Japanese. Once in a while you begin to see the whole thing emerge again. You

LG: remember the black riots, including Watts, where they burned up a good part of the town and which many people thought, "My God! how terrible - how terrible!" The blacks did not feel that way - quite the contrary. They said, "Okay, we're giving you a bit of a demonstration on how in the hell we feel."

I happened to be in L. A. about that time and I called our (Warehouse) Local 26 headquarters. The man who was president of the local, a black, was there and he says, "Look, we decided that there was no use keeping the staff around here today - things are a bit rough. I wouldn't be too concerned. I plan to stay here." His was one reaction.

I go out to see my brother, Sam, who lives not too far from Pacific Palisades - just north of that. One of his neighbors rushes in and says, "They're coming, they're coming!" And I sat there and said, "Who's coming?" He says, "You know who I mean." My brother kept his cool and said, "Why don't you go home?" See, just the two different attitudes.

There was a writer who put out a very brief booklet; it was a sermon which certainly was right. I think it was called, "My Brother Esau." Esau was a black brother; tells the people like the Jewish merchants in Watts, "If you want my advice, I'll give it to you - get out."

He was really telling them only one thing; everything else is bullshit. None of this business of stick around, be a little bit better on your credit; don't charge them quite as much interest - any crap like that. Don't keep giving them the rejects - the worst crap there is around. He just said, "Get out."

All these things I kept thinking about as I was coming back from Manzanar; the fact that here are a bunch of Japanese kids who are determined that this thing will not be forgotten. I know there are a lot of people going around saying that life is too short to hold a grievance. It is equally true that life is too short to forget some grievances.

Ward: So many people have felt that Judaism is synonymous with being a son-of-a-bitch in commerce. I have run into a great deal of that.

LG: Sure. I understand the anti-Semitism of the blacks in Watts. The Jews there are not a good example of humankind.

Ward: That's why this writer said, "The best thing you can do is get out"?

LG: Yes, "get out"! The Jewish merchants probably had the first stores that were ripped open, and they had it coming.

Ward: Did you ever run into a feeling among workers that outside of the needle trades no Jew ever worked with his hands?

LG: Yes, you get some of that feeling once in a while; plus a feeling that how come you're active in the unions, you could have done this - you could have done that; that sort of thing. Not hostile, just curious . . .

Ward: Israel has done a great deal to wipe out that feeling that Jews are not workers.

LG: The building trades in Israel at one time were almost entirely Jews. Jews are good building trades workers. My dad was a very good carpenter. The guys would come by the house to fix the plumbing and things of that sort, most of them were Jews and they were good workers.

Now, I think, the overwhelming majority are Arabs. I hope they are not drifting back so as to undermine the essential feature of Israel. The real pioneers, the real challutsim as they are called, challutsim, were the guys who were determined to go to Israel; they were not too interested in the orthodoxy or the religious side of the thing.

For awhile, you know, the Zionist movement played around with all kinds of places. Baron (Maurice de) Hirsch (of Germany) had a movement to settle them in South America, Brazil or Argentina.

LG: There were movements to try to get a Jewish homeland in parts of Africa. So it isn't as though all was focused in there; later on guys like Theodore Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement, and some of the people around him, felt that the closest tie was that of Israel. I doubt whether Israel would have grown to anything like its present shape or form or policy had it not been for the Holocaust. That made all the difference.

I am not a Zionist. I have made that very plain to people.

##

VI THE HAWAIIAN DRAMA OPENS

(Interview 12: 2 May, 1978) ##

Aftermath of the Tolan Hearing

Ward: Lou, you had something you wanted to refer to in regard to the Tolan Hearing.

LG: There is one small item which is of a bit of interest. In the latter part of World War II the man who was placed in charge of the War Relocation Authority was named Dillon Myer; his objective was to try to empty out those camps -

Ward: Yes, you did mention that -

LG: Completely unsolicited, he sent me a very warm letter. Now, skipping a few years, after winning the sugar strike, (in Hawaii), we took a set-back in pineapple in 1947.

In 1948 there was an attempt to try to get the Hawaii workers to disclaim any connections with the west coast and build Hawaii for the Hawaiians, one of these strictly company-union ideas. We decided that rather than just ignore it, we'd be better off to take care of the thing in the initial stages. We did that by calling a special convention of the ILWU in Hilo. During this convention I took out this letter from Dillon Myer and read it to the convention. After all a lot of the leadership in the formation of the union had been Japanese, particularly second generation Japanese.

LG: The letter had an enormous impact. We insisted on putting the thing to a referendum vote. The results were something like 98 percent or more to stay with the ILWU. I mention that because the appearance before the Tolan Committee, in its own peculiar way, came back to be of great benefit some seven years later.

Ward: Let's see where we are.

LG: Okay. In 1943 I returned to the west coast and Gene Paton, who was secretary at the time, had decided to volunteer for the army. I took over as temporary secretary until the election in the union convention.

Ward: The International?

LG: Right, where I ran for secretary-treasurer; I was unopposed. After I became secretary, it was obvious that a lot of things had to be done, along with a complete re-structuring of the union. We needed something in the way of a research department; we were going to continue to expand and move into new areas. We decided we had to have a newspaper. That's where Morris Watson came out to the west coast to edit The Dispatcher.

We moved to new headquarters down at 604 Montgomery Street, (San Francisco). There was also the business of trying to centralize the structure of the International: it had been splattered all up and down the coast; for example, having the secretary's office in Seattle and the president's office in San Francisco.

Part of it stemmed from the structure they had when we were part of the ILA, Pacific Coast District, and the attempt to keep the coast unified. From an operational point of view, it was really quite hopeless.

I began to go over all the records we could find on the union itself; where it had started; where it had stopped. I knew a good deal about the warehouse end of the thing. By that time, particularly in L. A., the friction between the

LG: Teamsters Union and the ILWU was pretty intense. There were a number of street fights and everything else going on; getting some sort of a solid structure in Los Angeles was one hell of a job all by itself.

There was a good deal of turnover of leadership and we just did not have the same quality of people we had in the Bay Area. Still and all, they made a lot of headway; they did have a growing organization, and that held on as ILWU Local 26.

Studying Hawaii

LG: I began to read up on Hawaii because I was fascinated as to why we did not have well organized longshore groups covered by contract or tied in to the Pacific Coast agreement. After all, Hawaii was dependent almost entirely, at least 85 percent to 90 percent, on west coast shipping; Matson had about the nearest thing to a complete monopoly on all trade to Hawaii.

The thing struck me as peculiar. I realized that we had martial law there, and consequently our unions at best, were just on paper. In some ports they were fairly active like in Hilo, because Hilo did not get the kind of military cargo that you had around Pearl Harbor or around Oahu.

I also found out that we had a long strike at Port Allen, that had been led by Jack Hall. Jack Hall had taken part in the 1934 strike and . . . .

Ward: In the '36 strike, too.

LG: And in the '36 strike, he decided, as a lot of seamen did, "What's wrong with doing your picket duty down in Hawaii?" It was quite a bit more comfortable.

Ward: He jumped ship in Hawaii?

LG: Actually, though, in 1936 I think they took off and struck in Hawaii. I think Jack had pretty

LG: well decided to live there. When the war broke, Jack's activities were directed toward organization; he had no specific plan as to which group they would be affiliated. Naturally he was very close to the trade union movement and particularly to the left.

For example, one plantation that did organize as I recall - that was on the island of Kauai, McBride - actually had a UCAPAWA contract. I don't think he himself was too sure what final form all this would take. It was just a matter of being dedicated to the idea of organizing, knowing damn well that it would be rough going but once it was done, it could be an effective organization.

Well, our contact with Jack Hall was a little bit fortuitous. Initially, I suggested sending somebody down there to look over the scene. This might have been early in 1944 or late in 1943. We sent down an old timer named Bill Kraft. He looked over the scene, came back and told us that things didn't look bad. He thought the longshoremen by and large wanted to be in the union.

Not too much later on, we asked Matt Meehan to go down there. Matt Meehan had formerly been secretary of the International Union; he was from Portland. Matt Meehan was also a veteran of the 1934 strike and had been a very effective leader.

Matt went down there and he came back with a very specific suggestion that we ask Jack Hall to go to work for us. Jack Hall did not go back to the merchant marine, nor was he in the army. He had very, very bad eyesight. Jack Hall wore these lenses that were extremely thick; I don't believe he ever drove a car, although when it came to reading and things of that sort, he managed very well.

He went to work for the Fair Labor Standards Act in Hawaii - it was a Federal position - and this is a matter of importance because it comes along later when we filed a suit under the Fair Labor Standards Act against the sugar plantations.

LG: But Matt did a much more thorough job than Bill Kraft. He was not confined in his thinking to the waterfront alone. Bill Kraft was a longshoreman, a good one, loyal union guy, but the union movement began and ended right at the piers.

In Hawaii the economy was quite different and I recall that I finally got everything that I could lay my hands on about the Hawaiian economy and its structure. A man who had been with the Department of Labor named (Dr. James H.) Shoemaker, had done this economic study of Hawaii which showed this enormous concentration of wealth in the hands of the Big Five.

The Big Five started off as factors - it's an expression you don't hear very often anymore, but factoring used to be a way that a number of industries were operated. For example, the garment industry in the East was a factoring operation for years.

The factor was the man who would supply the equipment, in say, a clothing factory. He might advance some of the money for raw materials - somebody else took over the responsibility for running the thing. The factor scooped it off the top and still owned the machinery. In the event his guy went belly-up, the factor would then have somebody else give it a whirl. So, factoring was a form of American enterprise.

The factors in Hawaii started off putting in a lot of money into whaling fleets supplying all the goods, the food and so on that would be required for the trip. They would husband the ship. They would also advance money. They would handle certain products that were brought back. They did not directly own the ships, they were factoring some of the enterprise being done.

The missionaries had managed to take over a great deal of the land there. In 1855, there was something called "the great mehele". Mehele was a system of dividing the land between what the King owned and the commoners. And it was hailed for a while as a re-division of land ownership.

LG: Part of the reason for the "great mehele" was because there was a question of firmly establishing title to the land. This was something the missionary families were interested in because they had become quite worldly, apparently so worldly that at one time there was some threat of expulsion from the churches, most of which were founded in New England . . . .

Ward: (The writer, James H.) Michener talked -

LG: Yes. The feeling was that the missionaries had gone down there to do good and did well. The "great mehele" resulted in a division of land among the Hawaiians, the big thing being that the royalty wound up with all the prime land. The commoners wound up with some small bits and pieces and some valleys, places where they could maintain a taro patch and have subsistence living, which is not the worst in the world.

When Captain Cook first landed in Hawaii, the estimates are that the population was as high as half a million to maybe seven hundred fifty thousand; these were not people who lived on imports or exports.

Sure, they were great navigators. It was quite common for Hawaiian seamen to sail from Hawaii down to Samoa, two thousand miles of open ocean, so as take in a royal wedding or a celebration of some kind. And they navigated by fixed stars, really much more outstanding seamen than the Phoenicians, who sailed within sight of land.

The Hawaiians had a self-sufficient form of existence - a lot of fish. They grew taro, a basic root. Bananas had somehow gotten there. Coconuts float all over the Pacific and take root by themselves practically. They brought a few animals in there; pig, maybe some chickens, in some of their initial migrations. Nobody is quite sure when Hawaii was settled, but the estimates are maybe 1100 years ago.

Well, anyway, the "great mehele" title was established on the part of royalty to specific land areas. From that point on, the missionaries began

LG: to move toward the acquisition of the land; the combination they used was the bed, the Bible and a deck of cards.

Ward: The Bible, the bed and a deck of cards. Where did the deck of cards come in? The rest I can figure.

LG: Yes - the bed is easy to figure out; in other words, they married into some of the Hawaiian royalty; the Bible you are familiar with; that runs to everything from the mumus to the speed of the hula. Sterling Mossman, part Hawaiian and a very good entertainer, has a piece of how they're looking up to the heavens after being told to do so by the missionaries while the missionary is taking away the lands, down below.

The deck of cards came in - there were a number of Hawaiian royalty who got quite fascinated with gambling - missionaries prepared to teach them. I recall a visit one time to a home of Paul Fagan. You might have heard his name because at one time he owned the baseball team of the San Francisco Seals.

He was married to a descendant of the Irwin family. The Irwin family you still read about because they had very large holdings here in California. The Irwins owned half the island of Molokai. They also owned, or she did, a place called Hana Maui. I don't know if you've ever been there; it's a very beautiful location.

Paul Fagan had a home on Diamond Head, a very lovely estate, one of the most beautiful homes there. He and his wife lived mostly on the Peninsula, down around Atherton. When he was showing me around the house, there was a round table, a little bit bigger than this one here, (a round table about four feet in diameter) but very similar in style and from almost the same period; it looked quite old.

I said, "What's that?" He said, "I just keep that around; thousands of acres changed hands at that table; it was used for poker." Prince Kuhio, one of the Hawaiian royalty, was an inveterate poker player. It was common for them to bet so

LG: many thousands of acres. As a matter of fact, Paul Fagan and I got to be pretty good friends after a while. That came about after the 1949 strike.

Ward: You had been reading a lot about Hawaii before you visited there - isn't that so?

Feudal Power - The Big Five

LG: I read everything I could put my hands on in terms of the economy. The key was very apparent; the power did not lie in the shipping industry, or in one particular type of business; the power lay in the hands of the Big Five. Those were Alexander Baldwin, C. Brewer, American Factors, Castle and Cooke and Theo Davies. Theo Davies was primarily held by British capital and British royalty.

Castle and Cooke was founded by missionary families. Alexander Baldwin was primarily founded by the Baldwins, also from missionary stock, primarily on the island of Maui. There are some very colorful accounts about the Baldwins. They were a pretty adventurous, daring lot. And you had interlocking directorates, at least when we got started. Now, there has been a diversification, primarily because the ILWU helped to break their grip.

There was an interlocking structure of capital, so that everything went back to the Big Five; the banks, and utilities, they held places on the board of directors. Each of the Big Five was also a general agent for insurance companies; one would be Prudential, another would be John Hancock, you name it. They would handle all their insurance themselves.

Outfits like C. Brewer, for example, did all their trucking themselves, again through a C. Brewer subsidiary. All the way down the line you found these interlocking directorates with the power leading back to this same circle. This man Shoemaker had done quite a thorough job in researching it.

LG: Pineapple, again; there were two mainland outfits which were not controlled by the Big Five; Del Monte and Libby; they had pineapple operations in Hawaii. But the biggest pineapple operation in Hawaii is Hawaiian Pineapple, owned by Castle and Cooke. Waialua Sugar Company was owned by Castle and Cooke. Ewa Sugar Plantation was also owned by Castle and Cooke. Castle and Cooke had a large interest in Matson, somewhere around 25 percent, maybe a little higher. Hawaiian Tuna Packers, the fish cannery, owned by Castle and Cooke.

This went so far that in a place like Maui, Alexander Baldwin even owned the little railroad that ran from some of the plantations down to the port of Kahului, and also carried some passengers once in a while.

When you started studying the economic structure, the one thing that became apparent was that when you are going after shipping only, it was like trying to throw a bull by grabbing hold of a pimple on his tail. You had to tackle them right at their base.

Well, land by its very nature is the key ingredient of all wealth in any island, partially because you have no frontiers. There's only so much there and after that you're in the water. The same thing was true of Hawaii, and we were primarily concerned with this huge financial grip.

I'm not saying that the Big Five had taken over all the land, but they were the effective owners or factors running this land. For example, a good deal of land down there still remains within certain estates like the Bishop estate, an old Hawaii estate. It was started by missionary families, but later became dominated in the main by the Hawaii branch of the family. The Bishop estate must be by far the wealthiest down there. It's almost impossible to buy land from them; land is only leased from them. Even a beautiful section of Hawaii called Kahala beyond Diamond Head towards . . . .

Ward: Oh, Oahu.

LG: Yes, it's on Oahu beyond Diamond Head, very lovely homes, beach homes. Some of the employers I got to know, after a couple of drinks, would start grumbling about the Bishop estate because they were on leased land.

I said, "What happens when the lease runs out?" They said, "Well, they will tell you what the new land rent will be. They feel they have a certain amount of public responsibility so they don't hit you too hard. On the other hand, they decide it's time they hit you, so you get hit. So what do you do? You own the house and you can pick it up and move anywhere you want."

The conclusion we came to was that there was no way of breaking the grip of the Big Five if we confined our operation entirely to the waterfront. In other words, the waterfront was merely a transportation division.

Let me give you an example. Here's a huge steel mill. They decide to ship out steel by truck. The trucks obviously are only a very small incident to the manufacture of steel. Where is the source of strength in that case? Not in that truck. Sure, you can harass the company but you don't really get at the heart of its power.

The same thing applied to Hawaii, except many, many times over because of the interlocking boards of directors they had. These things spread into everything you could think of, like American Factors was a very large holder in the retail field - the Liberty Stores down there. Now, you see them over here.

You have an interesting development going on. This is one of the rare cases of a colonial country reinvesting its money in the home country! A rare, rare thing! Liberty Stores are the ones who bought City of Paris (a San Francisco store) . . . .

Ward: Well, some of the big stores in San Francisco were constructed with Hawaiian money, weren't they?

LG: The Dillingham interests started off in Hawaii, primarily in building. They have become builders all over the world. They're a very successful construction outfit.

Ward: Okay, let me ask you - first, Bill Kraft was sent over there, then Matt Meehan. At whose initiative; was it yours?

LG: Primarily my prodding, yes.

Ward: You first suggested it to Harry, or what?

LG: Suggested it to Harry, right, and Bob Robertson.

Ward: So, it's fair to say that it was your initiative?

LG: I thought it was one of the places that we ought to tackle. Bear in mind, you were in a war situation. Organization on the mainland was sort of limping along because we had taken the no-strike pledge for the duration. Consequently, you fell back on the NLRB and you did do some essential organizing.

The principal reason for the growth of unions at that time was by natural accretion. Take some tiny unions in the shipyards; all of a sudden a war comes along and you have to turn out a Liberty ship every three days. All of a sudden where they had 200 or 300 people working in a shipyard, now they have 25,000. The union just grows and grows by accretion. The employers weren't fighting the unions, either; they were too busy doing their job and making their money.

Ward: This natural accretion didn't occur in the ILWU so much?

LG: To some extent, yes. For example, the waterfront membership grew very rapidly during the war. When the war was over, it was one of the few times that they had to let go some longshoremen, like in San Francisco. The warehouses would not grow as rapidly as the shipyards because you didn't have a sudden flood of work of that sort.

We still tried to hang on to the locals in Chicago and Minneapolis, New Orleans and a couple of other places. But it was rough going in terms of any real growth. The kind of organizing we did could not be as we had done in San Francisco. It was practically out of the question, so that it

LG: meant organizing and then waiting. I recall getting very friendly with the head of the NLRB in Chicago, spent a lot of time on Sundays, just sitting around in that heat and drinking beer. He was a heck of a good guy and anytime we got any organizing done, staff was assigned very quickly and he tried to move the process along; quite different to the situation you have today where the NLRB seems to specialize in every kind of dilatory procedure you can dream of.

Ward: Oh, the structure and staff of the NLRB has changed entirely; the motivations since that time -

LG: Oh, in those days, you had the Smith brothers in the NLRB; Ed Smith and I forget the other one. They called them the Smith Brothers.

Ward: Nat Witt -

LG: Nat Witt was with the NLRB; there were some very good people in the NLRB, a number who had been with the LaFollette Committee. So, they thought in terms of being pro-labor.

That's what the National Labor Relations Board is all about. It is set up for the purpose of giving the workers a chance to seek their own representation. They found it was their job to do it; entirely different to the composition of the NLRB right now. At times they were okay like the one I mentioned in Chicago.

They were not bad here in San Francisco. Madame Alice Rossiter was a very dignified, older woman, very friendly, rather stiff; so that it was a different composition; much more helpful. Nothing like the situation with which the ILWU is confronted today.

We have a hearing that's been going on with the Crocker Bank on getting an election for their computer services. We have them organized, you know. The hearing has been going on for one year now and there is no end in sight.

These are things to which the NLRB lends itself and that's the reason you have such a scream in Washington where the labor movement is trying to

LG: get some basic reform; the National Labor Relations Act and particularly its procedure - that's the key; and, of course, the composition of the Board.

Discovery of the Natural Leader

LG: Anyway, getting back to Hawaii. Matt Meehan's recommendation was that we put Jack Hall on and we did; gave him enough dough to get a small staff, a little tiny office - a store front. It was right across from Pier 11; I'm not sure if it was Maunakea Street or some other street. Maunakea Street was where a lot of the flower makers used to make the leis. The women would sit around, starting at daybreak when they'd get the fresh flowers in.

Ward: Did you go over there and help Jack Hall in setting up the office?

LG: Not particularly. Jack Hall knew a great deal about organizing. He didn't have to be taught. He knew an awful lot about government structure, infra-structure. His time spent at the Fair Labor Standards Act was not a waste. We sent over supplies; we didn't trust the regular mail for the supplies because a lot of things that went to Hawaii were on a so-called priority shipment. In other words, if yours wasn't so terribly important, that went to one side.

Ward: Did you suspect tampering with the mail?

LG: We knew it was under martial law, but actually I don't think the letters themselves were tampered with. Jack and I started a running correspondence that went on for several years on almost every issue that arose in Hawaii. There's a whole folder of correspondence between Jack and myself - in the ILWU library.

Later Sandy Salberg, a reporter for the Star-Bulletin, got a leave from the paper to do a book on Jack Hall. When he hit this correspondence, he hit the mother lode and was able to get a great

LG: deal of our thinking; the structure, the tactics and everything else. So, Jack hired one secretary and later on two as the organization began to move. The organizers were in the main local people who did a lot of it on their own time. Great. It's interesting the number of highly educated guys that bounced along, guys who had been active in trying to form a longshore union; they all pitched in.

These Hawaiians are not only dedicated union men, but tough; lots of courage; they knew what it was to fight the Big Five. I remember Freddie Kamahoahoa and Jack Kawano at one of the ILWU conventions; they were determined to get back over the hump. They had finally gotten an NLRB certification, after an election I think around 1940-'41, but before they could even get a contract under their belt, the war came along.

During the war Jack Kawano was put on some sort of a manpower commission, but obviously that was more for appearances than anything else. The real operation was run by the same shipowners in military uniform.

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LG: I was talking about Jack Kawano, who was the president of the longshore local in Honolulu. During part of the war he was raising tomatoes in addition to serving on this manpower commission. There was only so much he could do because of the restrictions of martial law; also a strong feeling of animosity on a number of scores.

The Japanese, for example, felt that the indignity inflicted on the Japanese on the west coast was intolerable. The manner in which martial law was applied in Hawaii, was to freeze people on the job, including housemaids or laundry workers, so that the Colonel's shirts would get out on time.

Ward: They couldn't even quit?

LG: People weren't allowed to quit and of course a lot of them wanted to quit because there were jobs available in Pearl Harbor. Sure, those jobs they had weren't paying a great deal of money.

There was a real working class song that came out of the war in Hawaii called "USED" - United States Engineering Department, I guess. A number of Hawaiians went to work for them and the song went along something like this: "USED, sucker every day, 50 cents an hour, 4 bucks a day, they make you whistle for your money." In other words, money always came late.

They had all kinds of different ditties to that; USED was one of the first songs I heard when I went down there; it's not one of the typical Hawaiian hula songs. It was written to this sort of hapahaole music.

Ward: When did you first go there?

A Boat-Ride To The Islands

LG: I went down there in 1944. Jack went on in 1943, late; we had begun to make some real headway. It must have been 1944 or early 1945. There was no way for me to get a plane down there and I went on a Hawaii freighter.

All they had done was to build a doghouse on the after deck. Oh, the thing was about nine by twelve and it slept six people - six or twelve people - I'm not sure myself. They were just bunks.

Ward: Sort of like an army troop ship?

LG: That's right, and slower than the second coming of Christ. It was a big vessel and carried around 14,000 ton of freight. It operated on black-out rules.

I wouldn't say it was a luxury voyage because we had a deck cargo of pigs and they had some cowboys on board. Just like they do with cattle,

LG: you know - they'd bring some cowboys on board and they'd build a corral on the deck. They had the pigs there where they could feed them.

When we got outside the Gate we hit some very heavy water. Well, I had had a bit of a going away party so I felt no pain and just went to bed. Bunk or no bunk, getting some sleep was no problem, but I could hear these guys running and screaming and pigs squealing during the night. No question that the seas were rough.

I got up in the morning, some of these corrals had broken in these heavy seas; pigs had been all over the goddam deck; pig shit was flying in every direction. A goddam mess and these guys were in bad shape and chasing the pigs. That must have been quite a sight out there in the dark - they weren't even allowed running lights. This was on account of the Japanese submarine menace, which was all a lot of bullshit. Anyway, talk about a mess - that was it.

I guess some of the seamen had had their share too, because in those days a ship hung around in San Francisco for oh, eight days or thereabouts; that entire ship was handloaded - there were no containers. So, the seamen had a chance to get around themselves. Well, anyway, one of the by-products of the storm was that somebody had left the door of the dining salon open and, hell, there must have been at least six inches of water in the damn thing. Every time the ship rolled the water would go to one side and roll back again.

But I determined to have breakfast and got in there, keeping my feet off the floor as best I could and lifting every time the ship rolled. I was served by one of the stewards and he must have had one of the world's greatest hangovers. He started off with a tray, heading for the table; then he'd wind up in the other corner, turn around; he could never quite make the table - he just moved with the roll of the ship.

Ward: Did the pigs get sea-sick?

LG: I'm sure, pigs get seasick. All I know though is that they shit all over. The skipper just didn't give a damn. I don't know; the guys aboard the

LG: ship said they spread the skipper out first and then built the ship around him; (Henry E.) Pasquale was his name - quite a lush. As a matter of fact he didn't even turn up in the dining salon until four or five days out, and when he did turn up he wasn't in the best of shape.

Some guy walked in there wearing no undershirt you know, just scivvies. "Get the hell out of here," Pasquale says, "If you want to eat that way, eat by yourself. You sit down in the dining salon with me, you wear a shirt. I don't want your sweat all over this goddam table." This guy had been working in the engine room.

But Pasquale was a tough old bloke. When he found out I was on board, he stuck around, just talking generally about the unions. He belonged to the Masters, Mates and Pilots. I don't think he showed up again until the ship was coming into Pearl Harbor. And he brought the thing in just like parking a car. He was a good skipper, apparently, but he'd rather relegate his other duties to the mates.

So, that was the first time I went down there. As a matter of fact, before then I was in contact with a number of seamen because I wanted to get supplies down there. I had an arrangement with one of the seamen - Acevedo was his name - I'm not sure if he was Nicaraguan or Panamanian - he came from some Central American country, but he kept changing the place all the time.

Acevedo was in a little business for himself. He'd bring things down like silk stockings, you know, a few watches, what have you. He'd make a couple of bucks on the side. He wouldn't take any money for delivering our stuff. He was a good union man, but believed in a bit of free enterprise.

As a matter of fact, there's an interesting story about Acevedo. He found out that moving fighting cocks from one part of Hawaii to another part of Hawaii was a heck of a lucrative business. After all, cock-fighting was and still is a favorite Filipino sport -

Ward: Filipino and Chinese.

LG: Yes, but primarily Filipinos now. For example, when the ship made a call at Honolulu and then had to make a call, say, at Hilo, he would take over some of the fighting cocks. The advantage to a guy who brought in a cock that way was that he had a ringer; in other words, nobody else would know how good that cock was.

The fact that you own the cock gives you first crack at all bets. For example, if you own the cock and you enter it, you match it; this includes the cocks pecking each other to see if both of them are in fighting trim. Then, you as the owner of the cock, have the right to cover all the initial bets to the amount you decide.

Let us say, you decide you are going to venture $500, you get first crack at all bets. After that everybody is in the act for himself - just betting each other.

Ward: Well, was there any restriction that he had to sneak these cocks on and off?

LG: Sure, cock fighting was illegal. So, I get the story from Acevedo that he is moving a cock from the port of Hilo over to Oahu. He had brought the cock on board the night before and put it in a secure place, covered. I think the same skipper, Pasquale was on that ship.

Somehow the covering on the cock got a bit loose, so that when daybreak came and the ship was going out, this cock starts crowing like mad. Acevedo was also the room steward for the skipper and the skipper calls him, saying, "Why the hell is that cock crowing?" Acevedo says, "We haven't left port yet."

But unfortunately the skipper, after having a cup of coffee, lifted himself up on his elbow, looked out and saw they were outside the breakwater and the cock was still crowing. He calls in Acevedo and says, "If we don't have chicken for dinner tonight, you're fired." I don't know if you can cook a fighting cock in that length of

LG: time and soften it up. Anyway, Acevedo took in a lot of supplies for us. Before I went there, we had sent Frank Thompson down there. Frank Thompson was (an ILWU organizer) from Sacramento.

Ward: When you went down there, you had not met Jack had you?

LG: No, I had not met Jack.

Ward: You took a personal liking to each other?

LG: Yes, we got along very well; even before then we had been in steady correspondence. I was spelling out some of my thinking, Jack was spelling out his; basically they coincided. For example, we both reached the same conclusion on a couple of things - one was that the history of economic struggle had been to a large extent racial struggles; they were racial unions.

Part of this was literally a by-product of the Big Five's calculated importation of people who could not very well communicate with each other. Also, the whole pecking order on the plantations. There had been some mighty efforts made to organize down there. For example, in 1920 there had been a strike of Japanese workers on the Island of Oahu -

Ward: Yes, you told about that.

LG: That's where they dumped all the families into Alaa Park and let them die there, during the 'flu epidemic. They broke the strike. In 1924 there had been a strike of primarily Filipino workers led by a man called Manlapit.* I think there were 14 guys killed. It isn't as though the workers weren't willing to struggle; it was just the fact that they didn't have the handle.

Battle Plans

LG: Jack and I reached the same conclusion that the time was ripe for organization. Even though the war was on, no great harm done in going out in a

* (Pablo)

LG: terrific organizing drive. The sentiment was so deep - a good deal like what we hit in 1936 with the warehousemen - that the guys would join and spend time organizing. We'd tell them frankly that the chances of striking as long as the war was on were not awful good, but first chance that came along we would really move.

Secondly, we reached the conclusion that we had to tackle sugar, still the number one industry as far as the Big Five were concerned. Sure, the military was big, but we had no plans to try to organize them. You had some unions in the military, by the way; all kinds of top boilermakers, pattern makers -

Ward: Seabees, that sort of thing?

LG: Some of them were Seabees, some were just construction workers or shipyard workers and they just went to work directly for the government. They weren't in the armed forces at all.

The military was not the economic stronghold of the Big Five. Sure, they had a lot of influence with them. Your generals and colonels and people like that scrambled like mad to be even partially accepted by the Big Five social circle.

That was a big deal, just like the Big Five took Michener in tow. They sold him a bill of goods out of this world with their hospitality, their own technique, and as a matter of fact they even sold a couple of people who came that way in 1948. I'll tell you the story when we get to it.

Anyway, we reached the conclusion that one, we had to tackle sugar; two, that an idea which apparently had been developed among previous attempts at organization that they would be better off to strike on one island and have the workers on the other islands help them financially had to be knocked down.

A terrible mistake in theory, because that is like matching dollars with the employers. You can't win. Sure, they would get a couple of bucks

LG: to help them from the other plantations because the workers are very generous and there's a real feeling of solidarity. What they weren't aware of, of course, is that if you shut down plantations on one island, or one plantation owned by one of the Big Five, with all the others working, then your economic strength has been cut proportionately.

The chance of the employer holding out is multiplied accordingly. You're not going to win on a dollar matching program.

The third conclusion is a very obvious one, that it had to be a completely inter-racial union; there would be absolutely no toleration for say, different chapters of Filipinos, or Japanese, or what have you. We went so far as to lay down basic rules that as sugar units were set up, the composition of the leadership had to be mixed.

There was also another feature of this thing, not to be overlooked. Initially, we had started organizing all the sugar mills but we realized very quickly that there was no reason why we shouldn't take the fields in with them; they were all part of the same company; it was just another division, another division.

On the other hand, we knew perfectly well we could not get NLRB elections for the field workers because the field workers were and are still specifically excluded from coverage under the National Labor Relations Act; one of the things that the farmers have been able to do. It has finally been turned around a bit in California by the Agricultural Labor Relations Act.

Jack was very shrewd politically, he had good feelings for things and he knew the islands and the people. He had a technique of his own; he was never reluctant to simply move around the islands; where he might sleep for the night didn't make any difference to him. One flophouse was just as good as another. He made the rounds, doing very little talking, and he'd come back with conclusions on what could be done; ninety-nine times out of a hundred he'd be right on the nose.

Ward: That's unusual - be right to that percentage.

LG: And particularly this faculty he had of not lecturing, not agitating, very quiet. He could make an effective speech when he had to, but just quietly asking questions. He would blend right into the scenery. Although Jack was very conspicuous among our Japanese and Filipino workers because Jack was about six foot two. Most Japanese, of course, are not that tall and very rare for a Filipino to be that tall.

Anyway, they were still holding elections there, notwithstanding martial law - Territorial government elections. There was a lot of steam and resentment among some of the national groups, whether it was Japanese or Filipinos or Hawaiians, the kicking around by martial law. So, in the 1944 elections we came out with quite a substantial victory in both houses of the legislature, and passed a little Wagner Act down there.

There was a good deal of discussion between Jack and myself because some of the features of the bill didn't sit too well with us. The question arose how much of a struggle do we put up around this thing? And finally I developed the position, "Oh, the hell with the goddam details, use this act once and then throw the thing away."

Because once we organized in the fields like sugar and pineapple, the rest of agricultural organization didn't amount to a hill of beans - maybe a dairy here and there, or a horticultural company raising flowers. In other words, you're not just going to get into many agricultural things. Parker Ranch, which was just strictly a ranch, we tried to organize some years later, but we got whipped by the Catholic church.

So, we decided we'd run that bill through in a hurry. That would give us a chance to move in the fields because we decided that the fields ought to come along.

Grass Roots Political Action

LG: Well, a bit ago I mentioned Frank Thompson; Frank was an old, old friend of mine dating back to the thirties, a Wobbly right down to his toe nails. He's a highly individualistic guy, could be very high-handed at times but honest as the day is long. He could be very tough when he had to be.

There are all kinds of stories about Frank. At one time he used to drive one of these big touring cars up in the woods and he could make a couple of bucks to get by on just by bringing in the lumberjacks for a night at the whorehouse and drinking establishments in Sacramento and then make sure they got back in time to go to work. Frank knew that whole motherlode country like you know your city block.

Anyway, Frank, I thought, would be a natural to be an organizer down there. I didn't think he would mind that in some of these little towns he'd get a night's sleep in a flophouse. Frank was just born for that sort of thing, so I got Frank to go down there; some of Frank's accounts are not only fascinating reading, they were actually hilarious.

For example, the employers decided to challenge us in terms of representation so we had to go through a whole series of NLRB elections, in every one of the goddam plantations. Frank would go ahead and have a rehearsal of the election with our guys - because of the language problems and everything else.

He would print up his own sample ballots, mimeograph them off and distribute them, have a meeting and go over the whole thing with the guys, item by item, where you vote and how you vote. Then they'd have a rehearsal and if the vote came out say, 97 percent, he'd say, "Okay, there are three percent who don't understand this - we have to do this thing again!" He'd do this sort of thing and the NLRB election victories down there must be the most startling in the country. We would knock over these elections, 98 percent, 100 percent in some cases.

LG: Frank loved the job and he stayed on there until the '46 strike. In the meantime, we were setting up the structure, organizing these units, getting them to function. Even though a group might have voted 100 percent and said, "Okay, we're ready to go, we want to fight now," our admonition was always the same, "You are not going to move - that's all."

We just kept pounding the same program; we would make no real move on the Big Five until we were sure we could shut down every single plantation and keep it down, on an industry-wide basis, on an island-wide basis, all the nationalities and races united. So there was a long process; in many cases guys were unhappy. But the discipline was maintained. The guys were very good and Jack knew exactly where we were going.

Pretty soon under this Agricultural Act we had the field workers and swept over to pineapple and began to organize that pretty rapidly too. On some places, our guys would have to get themselves smuggled into some of these islands like Lanai. Lanai is an island by itself.

Ward: It's privately owned, isn't it?

LG: It's owned by Castle and Cook or Hawaiian Pineapple - same thing. Matter of fact, the post office used to lease from the company. They owned every inch of land on the island.

Our guys arranged to get themselves smuggled in by sampan; the fishermen took them in from Maui. They'd meet at night; a plantation road somewhere, basements; there was a very thorough underground movement. We hit the wave just right and the guys were coming in by droves.

How To Quell Racial Friction

LG: Frank stayed on and I've got to tell you about an incident that happened to him and a man named Yasu Arakaki. They were setting up the unit at Olaa

LG: over on the Big Island and Frank was handling the meeting for the nominations. They nominated a chairman, a Japanese. He says, "Okay, nominations are open for vice-chairman, and another Japanese was nominated. And Frank drops the gavel and says, "No, he's not eligible."

"What do you mean he's not eligible? He's one of the founders of the union; the guy worked his ass off, he's competent." "He's not eligible because my instructions are that we are going to have all nationalities. Pick somebody else but he can't be Japanese."

He damn near came to blows with Yasu Arakaki, but Frank is the kind of a guy who says, "Look, those are my instructions and that's the way it's going to be." You can call it forced assimilation - anything you want. It didn't result at once in social assimilation. The employers had done a very thorough job of dividing the people.

Bear in mind, Japanese and Filipinos are not going to find it easy to communicate with each other. Neither one of them finds it easy to communicate with the Portuguese and none of them can communicate readily with an Hawaiian. One of the net results was a pidgin - you have pidgin English with some Filipino words thrown in, some Japanese words. For example, they won't say, "I have to go take a piss," or something like that. "I go shi-shi." Because that's the Japanese expression.

So, the agglomeration of the different languages resulted in a peculiar hybrid pidgin. It's a pretty demeaning language in the sense that it's not really a comprehensive language. The grammar is missing, syntax is not there. The use of words is so completely different. Just let me give you one example of pidgin - if you call somebody on the telephone, and a Japanese answers, "Okay, is so and so there?" He answers, "No, he no stop, he stay go."

I remember one time at a late night session between our committee and the employers, we weren't getting anywhere and I was irritated by everything,

LG: so I decided to just go off by myself and get a bite to eat in a Chinese restaurant which stayed open late. And I'm sitting there by myself, having some soup, and a couple of local kids who looked Portuguese or part Hawaiian, a mixture, were talking in the next booth; both obviously had had enough to drink.

One kid is telling the other one about his good fortune and this new job he's got. And his friend is saying, "Gee, number one good kind, gee no find no bettah." So, this kid is talking some more about this new job and making enough money so maybe he can get married. And the other kid says, "Oh, some lucky you - you no need nothing forever already." Jack would never talk pidgin, but he understood it very, very well.

Ward: He wouldn't talk pidgin?

LG: No, he never would.

Ward: Well, did he talk to a Filipino in Filipino or what?

LG: No, he's simply talk in plain, down-to-earth English. I would never try to speak pidgin. I don't think - well, you don't talk down to people -

Ward: They know it if you do?

LG: That's right, they know it. They may answer you in pidgin. That's another story. Just stick with your own way of talking, but make sure you are understood, that's all. And it might take a little longer to do it.

The one guy I know of who picked up pidgin very well was Henry Schmidt. He had an ear for the goddam thing that was out of this world. When he was down there for the '49 strike, he'd put out menus of what was being served in the soup kitchen, and wrote the thing all up in pidgin; these are priceless exhibits. Henry would make sure they were distributed to all these rich bitches who came down there as part of the broom brigade which was picketing the union headquarters and invite them all for lunch.

Ward: You were gearing up for the '46 strike?

LG: We got an agreement from the sugar industry in 1945. By that time the employers had brought down Jim Blaisdell who had got to be head of the San Francisco Distributors Association, which dealt with us.

Ward: You mentioned him before.

LG: During the war he and Kagel were in charge of War Manpower. It was during the war too that Sam Kagel decided that he would pick himself up a law degree and later work in the field of arbitration.

So I knew Jim fairly well, always liked him. Later on, I guess he and the Big Five had a falling out. It seemed to me that being a labor relations guy for the employers down there would be a most murderous undertaking.

You not only had the Big Five second guessing you all the time, their position was as close as possible to royalty; the net result was that if things had been miscalculated, none of them was going to take the responsibility. Somebody else had to be the fall guy.

Jim was a different kind of a character than most labor relations guys. He was not going to sit around and wait until the employers had given their general consensus of what ought to be done. Jim was the kind of a guy who, if he thought a certain program was right, would be very tough. He would walk in and tell the employers, "Look, that's the score - that's the way I see it." He would fight for his position, and I think it was bound to result in a rupture between him and the Big Five.

Ward: But he had something to do with your getting this contract in '45, is that it?

LG: When they saw the big swing to organization, the employers must have gone to Jim Blaisdell and offered him a job in Hawaii. He became the head

LG: of the Hawaii Employers Council and he was setting up the whole thing. And there the Big Five thinking manifested itself. For example, they took an adamant position on something like the union shop. They were hopeless. The most they would ever go for was maintenance of membership, which was invented in World War II by the War Labor Board.

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The Garbage Can Agreement

Ward: Okay, we're talking about Blaisdell and the agreement.

LG: Right. Actually, our first sugar agreement was simply a holding action. We got recognition, and I'm not sure whether all the field workers were covered.

Ward: You got maintenance of membership?

LG: Maintenance of membership, that's all we got, but we got recognition of a few things such as seniority, at least in general, and a couple of other items.

Ward: This was obtained without a strike?

LG: We got that without a strike. We also picked up a longshore agreement in 1945 for the first time. The organizational process was still going full steam; sure, there was a lot of concentration on sugar, but longshore fell into line very quickly.

Ward: Hall was also involved in that?

LG: Oh, sure, because Hall was our regional director. A lot of Hawaiians were very active in putting together the longshore group in a hurry - people like Levi Kealoha that I mentioned to you; Julian Napuunoa, Benny Big Nose, Sam Manu, Joe Keawe, Freddy Kamahoahoa.

LG: I recall that the session with the longshoremen took place outside a small house where Frank Thompson was living just back of Waikiki. Those days housing wasn't terribly expensive. I think it was on Seaside, that was it. Anyway, Jim came out there and we signed the agreement on the back of a garbage can. The guys thought it was okay; at least we made some progress.

Jim was a relaxed, easy-going guy and I think he understood what we were doing. I think he also already decided the union was going to make it. He knew there was this tremendous impetus down below and he knew damn well what martial law had done.

The one plantation as I recall that was holding out was Waialua - Waialua Plantation was a very profitable plantation, out at the western end of Oahu. It's still there. The manager of the plantation was a man named Midkiff*, fairly prominent family down in Hawaii. I bumped into him one day and he said, "Look, I know what you guys are doing; why don't you come out and we'll have a bit of a session at the plantation tonight. I think it might be worthwhile our sitting down."

So, I took Jack Kawano with me from the longshore local, because everything was mixed up in the same pot; nobody was thinking "longshore for longshore", "sugar for sugar." It was all one big movement, one crusade. Jack Hall might have been tied up in something else. We were terribly busy - no such thing as an evening or a weekend without a meeting. Jack had the same feeling we all did - this was the time to move; you did not slow up.

So, we went out there and he was a very gracious host. We had dinner and he opened up the subject after dinner. He said, "I know what you fellows are trying to do. You want to get these members down here and that means dues. I'd like to work out an arrangement with you so that whatever your dues are, I'll pay that much a month to the union. Don't bother my people."

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*John H. Midkiff

LG: This guy had this thing so firmly in mind there was absolutely no way of shaking it - I figured what's the good of telling him that that wasn't what we wanted at all; that a union isn't made up of collecting so much money, it is made up of people and it's people who get into action and that is where the strength comes from - not because you can collect a couple of bucks.

I finally told him, "Look, Mr. Midkiff, it's been a pleasant dinner and I understand what you're saying, but I'm afraid it just isn't acceptable." He said, "Well, why?"

I said, "Because we are not interested in getting money from the company, except through the union and only for the membership. I know that you are very strong here, and that people around here are a bit concerned about joining the union. You do pay more money than the other plantations, about 5 cents an hour more in all categories. The best I can figure out is, just like the automobile industry had a Henry Ford, the sugar industry is going to have a Midkiff. All we can do, I suppose, is hold you up as a bad example of someone who is determined to break the union."

So, he says, "Well, that's too bad." "Yep," I said, "In view of what you're saying, we really don't have any choice. It's not that I have any hard feelings for you, but there's no other way of going at it. Our organizers will be out here next Saturday morning."

And we gathered together a whole team of organizers, about twenty of them, and said, "You go out there; you might have difficulty if this guy decides to fight. On the other hand, he might decide he doesn't want to be another Henry Ford, and you'll find out very quickly."

I said, "Under no circumstances, do you take any back talk from self-appointed guards around the housing projects. If the police come along, just tell them you are exercising your rights." And sure enough, when they hit town there, an awful lot of curiosity but no attempt made to interfere with our guys. So, Waialua fell in place, too.

LG: What was really important was his thinking, without any real understanding of what kind of impetus was down below in terms of a union that represents the membership and gives them a new kind of dignity. That is the one thing he could not buy, that kind of paternalism was so deep in those employers.

VII MEANWHILE, ON THE MAINLAND

(Interview 13: 9 May, 1978

The Party Connection Dissolves

Ward: Lou, you were saying from the beginning of the war your party activities diminished. Do you want to talk about that for a minute?

LG: I'd say they not only diminished, I had practically no contact with them for all intents and purposes. While my sympathies still lay with them, whatever contact I had would be very casual and occasional. For example, in the case of the North American strike, it was just a peripheral thing, no more than that.

Ward: When you say peripheral thing, you mean to say that you didn't necessarily consult with them?

LG: That's right, yes - oh, they might -

Ward: You still talked to them?

LG: Oh, sure, I always talked to them, still do. They might have some ideas, some suggestions or concerns, but there was really nothing in the form of an organizational connection with them. My life was really wound up with the ILWU. Then, some of the things that you get mixed up in with the war going on, related to the war effort -

Ward: Well, you were pretty busy.

LG: Yes, I worked on this war shipping report, got to see most of your top brass.

Ward: You saw a couple of admirals, I know.

LG: Admiral Land, I told you all about his reaction. On the other hand, somebody like Lew Douglas, head of War Shipping Administration, his attitude was really quite different. Forrestal's attitude was one of curiosity. Anyway, we covered a lot of ground, including some of the people who were in charge of military cargo movements.

Work On The War Labor Board

Ward: What about the War Labor Board experience? That was the Regional War Labor Board, wasn't it?

LG: Yes, headquarters in San Francisco and I think it covered the western region - they might have had another group in the northwest. I don't recall spending much time with the War Labor Board on problems that concerned Oregon and Washington. Either they had a separate piece of machinery or things were handled pretty much pro forma through the San Francisco region.

I became a labor member of the War Labor Board for this region which covered California, Arizona and Nevada, because I recall making a trip to the Westward Ho Hotel - the one they used to call the Westward Ho House - in Phoenix.

Anyway, I was serving on the War Labor Board and at the same time I was doing my ILWU job, setting up headquarters on Montgomery Street, filling out the staff, getting some form of organizational structure, finally resolving this question of having a divided International, San Francisco and the northwest, where part of the International office was up there and part of it down here; working out an organizational chart that would be something around which we could operate.

LG: The War Labor Board job was an additional duty, extremely important for us; we had taken the no-strike pledge, although that came back to haunt us a bit, particularly after Harry decided that the no-strike pledge ought to continue after the war. That was just going overboard. Life itself wouldn't have made it possible to adhere to that, no matter how many times you had taken the pledge.

Ward: I didn't realize he took that position.

War Labor Board Activities

LG: Yes. Anyway, the main objectives as far as I was concerned were the issues around which you could get adjustments on contracts, which were pretty narrowly defined by the War Labor Board.

One of the basic issues was one of inequities. If you could prove that inequities existed either within an industry or as related to other industries, adjustments could be made. The general idea - and you had to see that it worked - was that the War Labor Board was for the purpose of taking care of legitimate grievances as far as the unions were concerned.

Simultaneously we also had pretty effective price control. Your OPA (Office of Price Administration) was in business and you also had a Manpower Board. The Manpower Board in some cases worked with the War Labor Board because manpower had to be moved from one area to another. We were pretty deep into this thing. In some cases you took an awful kick in the pants.

I remember one specific situation involving Chili Duarte, who was active in our union. I guess he was business agent for Local 6 and pretty much in charge of the Oakland operation. I don't believe he was president after Gene Paton - I think Maguire, Donald Maguire, was there instead, who sort of faded out of the picture.

The Navy was setting up a supply depot in Oakland and they were determined to get as competent a staff as they could to set up a huge

LG: supply operation. They worked with Chili who managed to get oh, 400 to 600 of our warehousemen, key guys, out of the warehouses to go to work at the depot.

They did a fine job. Yet, toward the tail end of the war these guys were suddenly laid off and the depot began to hire civil service people instead.

I remember taking a trip over there with Chili to talk to the admiral in charge of the base. He was very flattering about the job our people had done, very appreciative of it. "Why the devil are you letting them all go?" we said. "We'll take care of them, they have seniority still from the job we took them out of, but why the hell are you letting them go? There's still a great demand for competent warehousemen."

"Well," he says, "You've got to understand; my table of organization requires that I have a certain number of people on the base." Another way of saying that unless he had a certain number of people, it didn't warrant an admiral, or whatever he was, being in charge. He was determined to fight out the war in the foxholes of Alameda and nobody was going to change his mind about that.

So, you would get situations like that which were not too happy, but inside the War Labor Board itself, we managed to get a couple of things done. Part of it became a technique of doing an awful lot of homework to make sure that you had all your facts in hand; making sure that you held the trade union group together.

There were the union members on the board, the public members and the employer members; a tripartite board. The public members, oh, most of them were quite good; the instructions were taken absolutely literally. No way of moving them around, even though we knew from a realistic point of view that in some industries you either took care of problems or the net by-product would be either a major slowdown or all kinds of difficulties in getting the job done.

LG: One of the interests I had during the time I was on the board was to abolish regional differentials for warehousemen. For example, places like Stockton and Sacramento were part of the ILWU, the warehouses, but were not getting the same base rate because they were considered farm areas.

This is behind us now, but in those days there was a rural differential and it came up in many industries. I was determined to get them all in line with the master contract rate, which we eventually did on the inequity theory. This took lining up a lot of support on the part of the other labor guys, as well as getting some of the public members and industry members to go along.

We got those things done all right. But it meant putting in an enormous amount of time, let us say, on some problems Steelworkers had. Thimmes was on the board - Jim Thimmes.

Ward: Oh, on the same Labor Board?

LG: Yes. Paul Chown (who was to become an official of the United Electrical Workers' Union) worked as a staff member on the board at the time. There's an interesting item about the board: Bob Treuhaft, the husband of Decca Treuhaft, (Jessica Mitford, prominent writer) heck of a good lawyer and an awfully good man, had come out to the West Coast some time in the early part of the war and wanted to apply for a job at the War Labor Board.

Later on he was told that one of the reasons he didn't get the job was that he was a friend of mine. During that time, he was not a friend of mine; I was one of the people he wanted to meet. And Bob Treuhaft found himself guilty of willingness to associate, one step removed.

Chown was very helpful on the Board. Wendell Phillips of the Bakery Wagon Drivers was a member of the board with me and he was an interesting character. For one thing, Wendell Phillips was a very diligent, hardworking guy. He came into the board perhaps as well prepared as any member

LG: on the board. Wendell Phillips wound up with us on most of the issues.

Ward: He was a Kidwell protege.

LG: Yes, and Jack Shelley. Wendell was good. Oh, just after I retired Wendell also retired. One of the outfits in San Francisco which calls itself Industrial Relations Research Association, people connected with labor, attorneys, arbitrators, personnel men of some of the companies; it's a peculiar mix; they get speakers in for special occasions, usually luncheon meetings. They decided they wanted to have a bit of a dinner for Wendell and myself; it would take more time than for a luncheon.

Anyway, Wendell spoke and among his reminiscences was the time of the War Labor Board. One of the reasons he could get results from the board was that the employers did not do their homework.

When I was asked to speak, I mentioned that I owed Wendell Phillips some thanks for an incident that occurred many, many years ago. The board was meeting in Los Angeles and we stayed at the Biltmore Hotel. Apparently, the main reason was that the chairman, Thomas Fair Neblett, had something going with this hotel.

Many years after the board he turned up in Hawaii with one of these "training in industry programs"; the business of training people to become hotel workers after they have been plantation workers. He decided he'd better work with the ILWU, at least on the outside, and with the Teamsters, (Art) Rutledge, who had most of the hotel workers on the island of Oahu.

Neblett came to me and said, "Look, I know perfectly well if you and I start bucking heads the whole thing will fall apart. I want to get along with you." I said, "That's pretty simple, just work with our people, at least on the outside islands," which he did.

Anyway, back to the Biltmore. I happened to see in the paper that Katherine Dunham (leader of a famous dance troupe) was in town. I had met

LG: her in the northwest some years before, so I stopped by there and said, "Hello", and told her if the show gets over at a decent time, come by and we'll have a drink at the Biltmore.

She walked in; there's a big bar in the Biltmore where the politicians used to hang out, and everybody else. I sit down with Katherine Dunham, and I guess in those days it was still a little bit unusual for somebody to sit down with a black person. Well, I noted out of the corner of my eye that members of the board were drifting over to the bar; but they didn't come over to the table. Wendell Phillips did.

He sat down and said, "What are you drinking, and who is this friend you have with you?" It was just that simple. I mentioned that with belated thanks to Wendell Phillips, not that I think he suffered any penalty by meeting Katherine Dunham. She was a very beautiful, attractive and talented person.

Anyway, in the course of my remarks I said it wasn't that I put all the employers in one camp; that they came home at night, slapped the wife and beat the kids, but some of them were just stuck with the policies they had to carry out as employers, and a great many were still troglodytes in their thinking.

The most amusing remark made at this dinner for Phillips and myself came from Dwight Steele, who at one time had been head of the warehouse employers' group here and then later had gone to work in Hawaii. Now, he is very active in things like the Sierra Club. He got up during the question period - Sam Kagel was chairman - and said, "Well, maybe not really a question but maybe it is, why did I put out $10 bucks for dinner to hear a couple of guys say that I'm a troglodyte who doesn't do his homework?" So, he sort of topped both of us.

The War Labor Board was an experience by itself. One of the characters from the public side was Paul Shoup; he was (the head of) Southern Pacific Railroad. Like Southern Pacific management

LG: over the years, he was ferociously anti-union and yet he was an odd character. He was getting along in years, perhaps the general war situation or what he saw going on had some impact on him.

He used to hunt me out when we were in L. A. and we would sit and talk. As a person, he didn't have the horrors, but he knew perfectly well how to use them. For a number of years afterward, come holiday time, there would be a case of grapefruit arrive. I guess it was just his way of saying "hello". He never expected anything and of course he never got anything.

Ward: Well, what did he talk about?

LG: His curiosity was about a lot of things; for example, what kind of trade unionism was I talking about? He knew it was not the same as the others; he knew it was a very deep, rank and file kind of trade unionism. Where did we expect it to go? What did I know about the Russians?

Ward: He was trying to find out something.

LG: He was saying, in effect, "Look, all of a sudden, here we are allies with the Soviet Union." I'm sure he had been an enemy of theirs from the moment he heard the word "Bolshevik"; maybe I knew something about what made these people tick. I think it was that sort of curiosity; to him, this would be a completely new world, something dif-erent. Those couple of years I spent on the board were profitable. I was fairly lucky because with people like Paul Chown around - he worked full time for the board for a while - staying abreast of developments was a lot easier.

Ward: Ten minutes of talking to him would prepare you for a board meeting, so to speak?

LG: That's right. We got some of the things we wanted for the ILWU; we also managed to get quite a few things for a number of the other unions.

Ward: And you got a case of grapefruit once in a while.

LG: We got a case of grapefruit once in a while and some terribly humorous experiences. I was mentioning this incident with Katherine Dunham. As I recall, she asked me if I wanted to go to a jam session that began somewhere around midnight, and I said, "Fine, but I don't have any transportation." She said, "Oh, I'll pick you up."

We went out to the Sunset Strip, some spot where a lot of these musicians and singers were gathered. It was an awful lot of fun and then all of a sudden, it's damn near four o'clock in the morning. And she says, "You know, you're not going to be able to get back now." I said, "Maybe I'll get back in the morning - get at least a couple of hours sleep."

She says, "That's all right - I've got this house up in the hills and there's a place downstairs and you can get a nap." So I go up there and set the alarm for six in the morning. All I know is the address of the place and generally where it is.

I woke up early and decided I better get somebody who is going to be able to get me downtown. Getting a cab up there was out of the question; they were all working on gasoline rations.

So, I called Jimmy Slavin, who was working for the ILWU as an organizer. He was an interesting little guy. Jimmy stood around five foot three or four; he had been a fighter and he had one of these rare facial characteristics, matched cauliflower ears. He dressed meticulously.

When he and Bill Gettings (another ILWU organizer) walked down the street, side by side - Bill weighed about 260 or 70 and stood around 6 foot 3 - it was quite a combination. I knew they stayed at the Figueroa Hotel, so I called. I knew Jimmy was an early riser, and he was up.

I said, "Jimmy, you've got to do me a favor. I have to be back at a War Labor Board meeting at the Biltmore Hotel." I had some work to do before the hearing on some case of the Steelworkers.

LG: I said, "Will you come pick me up?" He said, "Sure, where are you?" Up in the Sunset Hills; I told him to take a certain street and stop on top of that hill; there was a cross street where I would meet him.

He drives up there in an overcast and misty morning. There are no houses around there; Jimmy arrives right on time to pick me up. He's looking around and says, "By the way, where did you spend the night? In a cave?"

Ward: Okay, now did you have anything else before we get back to Hawaii?

War's End Brings Changes

LG: Well, there are a couple of things. A lot of things happened the minute the war was over. Gene Paton came back and assumed the presidency of Local 6; OPA was repealed over our very strenuous objections.

Ward: Trade union objections?

LG: Oh, sure. The big argument of the employers and the whole press campaign was that prices would go down the moment OPA was repealed, because then free competition would be at work again. Of course, the opposite happened.

Pat showed a real sense of timing and acuteness; even though he had a contract in effect when OPA was repealed and the prices started going up, he led a series of slowdowns, stoppages and just general harassment of the employers until they began granting voluntary wage increases in the middle of the contract. By and large we made them stick.

Right after the war the Machinists in San Francisco went on strike.

Ward: You were pretty friendly with Hook and Dillon, weren't you?

LG: Yes, I had known them a long time and I liked them. They were both in my opinion damn good trade unionists. That was Lodge 68, one of the friends of the ILWU before we were expelled from the AFofL: they continued their friendship long afterwards.

Ward: They served as a bridge between the AFofL and the CIO.

LG: They were one of the groups that did. The Machinists at one time, because they had waterfront machinists, were part of the Maritime Federation.

Hook and Dillon led the strike, and they made a decision that the strike should be spread as rapidly as possible. That was not too difficult, because there is still a great deal of craft unionism in the whole labor movement.

Many of the warehouses were not warehouses in the old sense of the word. We had all the coffee houses, places like Consolidated Chemical that had all kinds of glue products and what have you. In any number of places you would have one or two machinists. Hills Brothers had a good number of machinists. What Hook and Dillon did was shut down every place where they had machinists, so that you have the anomolous situation of five machinists in a place like Best Foods shutting down a place with 500 workers. At Hills Brothers a half dozen machinists shutting down a house with a couple of hundred workers. I got into some long discussions with Hook and Dillon, and then the (Communist) party got in the act too -

Ward: You thought they were mistaken?

LG: Terribly mistaken. I kept trying to tell them, "Look, you're going to lose the strike on account of this." They wouldn't buy it - they said, "How in the hell can it hurt us when we've got that much economic pressure going?" Some four or five thousand machinists out, plus a total of some 45,000 other workers who were also out.

I'll admit that at points the argument got pretty violent. There were a couple of party guys in the Machinists Union who felt that this was the

LG: greatest thing since the wheel - the ability to pull out that many workers. I said, "It doesn't work that way. When you go through a battle the first thing you do is carry the fight yourself; that's the number one job. Explain the issues to the workers involved. If you have issues covering other workers as well, you're just that much better off. You don't ask somebody else to put his job on the line unless certain things happen.

"One, for example, if they try to run strike-breakers, that's an entirely different situation. Then calling on the rest of the labor movement to put their paychecks on the line is perfectly sensible and you'll get that support; but to start off a strike by saying okay, we'll show you what economic power we have, our craft can tie up 45,000 workers, will not work to your advantage.

"Instead it's going to pull you down because those 45,000 workers will be right on your back, not helping you." I just couldn't drive it home.

We got into some pretty violent quarrels in the ILWU. When I spoke openly about these things at a large meeting of Local 6 some officials were yelling at me, "Are you saying that we ought to go through their picket line?" I said, "Absolutely 'No'. I'm not saying we should go through their picket line. I do think it is our job to tell them they are making a damn foolish mistake."

Ward: Well, the Machinists were putting Local 6 members on the bricks, weren't they?

LG: Right. There were several things they could do, any one of which would make sense. One, just let the machinists stay in those jobs if you have a commitment from the employer that they will meet whatever the new scale is. A second one would be - let them withhold their labor, but don't picket the place.

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Ward: You were talking about this meeting at which you discussed the Machinists' strike.

LG: Yes. The concomitant to withholding their labor would be the guarantee from us that none of us would do any of their work, nor would we allow any foreman or anybody else to do their work.

Although most of our members understood what I was talking about, some of them didn't - a picket line is a picket line! Here was one of the real weaknesses of the craft type of unionism unless it handles itself intelligently.

You are not telling our people okay, we'll see what we can do in the way of protecting your interests and we're not going to ask you to get into the melee until you have to. Instead, you're saying, "Look, you are going to be a good union man and respect the picket line."

Of course, you're going to be a good union man and respect the picket line, but that's not going to happen throughout every establishment that is on strike, and sooner or later a crisis occurs. The Machinists' International moved in, and I guess all kinds of unions by that time were really bending their ear at whoever was the head of the Machinists' Lodge 68.

It was put in receivership, Hook and Dillon were out, and it was the loss of a good ally. It was the last time that I know of that the Machinists tried to do anything on that scale. The man who has been in charge the past few years is quite good - Stan Jensen. He understands these things a lot better.

Except for one incident where they did strike the Machinists at Hills Brothers, our guys were really storming mad about the whole thing because there was no need for it.

The company was prepared to sign any kind of a stipulation they wanted on giving them the same rates of pay, but no, that was not it. The group

LG: they negotiated with was primarily based on the machine shops and the warehouse employers did not belong to it. As I remember, George Valter, who was still working at Hills Brothers, had all the machinists up to Local 6 for a meeting. We asked their representatives to be there and really had a donney-brook. It went on for about four hours on these same basic issues.

George was so angry he said, "Let's sign them all up in the ILWU; they know this damn thing is wrong." I said, "No, you can't use a situation where a union is on strike to start a raiding operation, for Christ's sake. Just see what the devil they'll do themselves." Sure enough, the machinists worked out something and went back to work.

It was the old craft argument that the Wobblies had argued about years before in old Wobbly literature. This showed how a plant could be broken down into various crafts, that comprised only a handful of members.

You could take one big industrial establishment and if you started to carve the thing up by crafts, you'd have everything from the Janitors' Union, waitresses in the cafeteria, a moldmaker, a plumber, an electrician, a carpenter; and this goes on endlessly. Of course, that is the fundamental weakness of craft unions.

Incidentally, that lesson is one we learned pretty damn well when we were organizing in Hawaii, even though once in a while you'd have noises in the crafts. There's no question but that the pecking order in American society and the craft consciousness of some groups of workers - even when they belong to industrial unions - is something you can't ignore.

Skilled vs. Unskilled

Ward: But what did you do to overcome the pride of the skilled craftsman as compared to the unskilled and semi-skilled? How did you work that?

LG: There were several things you could do. For example, we still have a lot of maintenance machinists in the warehouses. We finally decided rather than negotiate for them separately, we would simply write a provision in the agreement whereby they would automatically get the prevailing rate that the Machinists established in their basic agreements.

Another way, as we did in Hawaii, was set up a series of labor grades. A journeyman mechanic, whether he be electrician, moldmaker, machinist, or pattern-maker, does feel that the years he spent as a journeyman entitle him to something more; on that score he's right. You simply set up the labor grade system; every once in a while you might have to bend that curve, tilt it a bit.

Some unions try to handle the thing on an industrial basis by percentage increases, something I'm very much opposed to. If you keep negotiating percentage increases, the differentials between top and bottom expand. However, periodically we take up the question of adjustments for the crafts.

The Auto Workers, for example, which are bound to have a lot of skilled tradesmen, literally have separate bargaining for the craftsmen. I'm not sure they have a veto power over the agreement as such, but something that comes very close to it.

Ward: Yes, and it has caused some trouble at times, too.

LG: There were times when they thought they would have a wide open split. It's not an easy one to handle; if you ignore the thing you're just setting yourself a time bomb.

Ward: Let me ask - I think you told me that the ILWU now has Trona (a chemical plant near Death Valley)?

LG: Yes.

Ward: What did you do then, because a number of organizations have had Trona since the Mine-Mill (Union) originally organized it. Did you have to meet the conditions of the first contract the Mine-Mill got there where after 20 years seniority, the common laborer made as much as the highest skilled mechanic?

LG: No, I think that's been pretty well abolished; they have labor grades.

Ward: I would think so. It was recognized as a fallacy.

LG: Right. And mentioning Trona, there was an attempt there - oh, seven or eight years ago, thereabouts - some union tried to raid Trona again, basing their appeal primarily to the machinists and groups of that sort - and that's the sort of thing where you have a built-in time bomb unless you do something about it.

On the other hand, to merely kowtow to the highly skilled groups is a mistake. Some unions, for example, wind up with their bargaining committees entirely from the higher groups; they negotiate for themselves first before the rest of the people get anything. It's one of the internal problems; if you handle it, it's not going to be that much of a headache. If you decide to brush it aside or kick it in the head, then you are in trouble.

In Hawaii we had some screams on the part of the machinists because we had not bent the wage line for some five or six years and had not gotten them anything in addition. Then you had guys on the committee who, because they worked in the fields, - and in the fields, the operations in the main are still incentive, but you can't have incentive operations for a machinist or a carpenter - would say, "Well, if they don't like what the hell they're doing or how much they're getting, they can get out here in the hot sun and make as much as we do." You had situations where they're making more than the skilled man.

I mention this thing about the machinists because this is the culmination of the whole damn fight that had gone on in the A F of L on the question of industrial unionism.

Although we never saw the possibility of trying to move industrial unionism into certain established fields where the unions were not industrial, but they were clean, they believed in workers' solidarity; they helped out, they took

LG: progressive positions, they would support industrial unions, but they were not about to destroy their craft unions.

What happened is that some of the craft unions, even though they have a craft base, will still become industrial unions, because they recognize that the industrial form of bargaining, and organization makes sense. The Machinists Union could make a blunder such as the one I mentioned; then that same outfit goes up to Boeing (Aircraft Company) in Seattle, organizes the plant completely on an industrial basis -

Ward: And made a success of it, too.

LG: Yes. They did not organize a damn bit differently than the Auto Workers did when they organized the airplane manufacturers in Southern California. Neither did they abandon the old craft locals, and I can't expect them to.

VIII SCARING THE BIG FIVE

A Smashing Political Victory

Ward: Now, can we go on to Hawaii?

LG: Well, we'll go on to Hawaii. The Shoemaker report I mentioned concluded that 85 percent of the trade and commerce and manufacture in Hawaii was in the hands of the Big Five.

Ward: But, you said the other day that in 1945 some sort of Hawaii Labor Relations Act was adopted. How could that have happened with this tremendous anti-union power of the Big Five still in force?

LG: Because one of the by-products of the whole upheaval against martial law, the kicking around the people had gotten from the Big Five, took a political turn.

Ward: Something must have happened in '44 - that was the last time Roosevelt ran for president, wasn't it?

LG: Right. And it was also a big upheaval in Hawaii with a lot of local people elected for the first time. Jack was very astute on that; he spent a lot of time lining up certain people he thought could make it.

He knew a great deal about the exercise of leverage, so that in the plantation communities there was such a wave that there was no problem electing our people, although in some cases you might deliberately pick a Republican because he might swing certain weight that you wanted.

LG: There was an overwhelming victory on the outside islands in all the plantation communities. These were Territorial elections. Bear in mind this was still a Territory at the time; it was under an appointed governor, named (Ingram) Stainback. He was no pal of the ILWU. In the 1944 election we got a good majority in both houses of the legislature.

Ward: That must have scared the hell out of the Big Five.

LG: It did, it did. There I think the union used good judgment. Jack's conclusion was, "If we start pushing too fast on a lot of things, we're going to lose a lot of people." There were certain basic things they wanted in the way of improvement in workmen's compensation; we made some headway there, but the biggest thing we picked up out of the election was a Hawaii Labor Relations Act.

It was important to us; we started off by signing up the sugar mills because they were covered by the National Labor Relations Act, but we very quickly realized that we had to have the field workers too, and they were not covered. Then we were also beginning to move in pineapple where the field workers were even more important because pineapple is much more of a seasonal operation.

I recall getting some guys elected who might not have been the finest legislators in the world, but they sure as heck knew what they ought to do, including a number of union men like Joseph Alapai Kahulakula, Jr. I remember him from the Island of Maui. We elected Bill Paia who was from Kauai, elected Hisaoka and Pule from the Big Island and Yamasaki from Maui.

Ward: Now you were dealing with people from different ethnic backgrounds and quite a racial mix. Were there not some problems with illiteracy, and so forth?

LG: Well, I'd say there might have been some problems of illiteracy. A good deal of the material we put out in those days would be in more than one

LG: language. There were regular translations, for example, on certain key issues in Ilokano, the primary Filipino dialect that is spoken there. The basic Filipino groups there were - first there were some Visayans. We never bothered to translate in Visayan. They had been there quite a long time and most of them got by pretty well in English. The later groups that came there from the Philippines were from Ilocos Norte - they spoke Ilokano.

Ward: Well, when it came to the actual ballot, did you have study groups to teach the guys what to do with that ballot?

LG: Oh, yeah, they went out, just like Frank Thompson did; Filipino leaders, Japanese leaders, some Chinese and a number of Hawaiians. That paid off because these people could correspond directly to their own groups.

Ward: They were like party whips?

LG: Yes, Filipino guys would go out and talk to Filipino guys, house to house. I recall the meetings at that time, trade union meetings in the main, but after the main report, they would break up into political rallies by language groups.

You would take 150 people over in one corner of a big ball park, 200 people over in another corner. You'd have translations going on in Japanese, in Ilokano and so forth. One of the people we had was a Reverend Yadao.* His daughter, Priscilla, later became our union librarian.

Ward: What nationality?

LG: He was a Filipino and he spoke Ilokano; he did our radio program as well. I recall having him on the radio program during the 1946 sugar strike, and I think he was on the radio program before then. When that radio program was first started

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*Reverend Emilio Yadao

LG: in Ilokano, it had an enormous listening audience because it was the first language broadcast that had taken place in Hawaii.

They would all listen. Everybody knew what time people got up in the morning on the plantations. It was an early morning program and they would automatically switch on to that, you see.

Ward: I've had my own experiences with radio programs in hostile territory. How did you find a station that was willing to put you on?

LG: I don't recall whether it was one of the big stations. Radio was not one of the fields where the Big Five had taken over. Newspapers, yes. I don't recall their having the same degree of control over radio. I think a number of independents broke in there. I don't recall our having that much trouble, getting radio time.

Ward: Any censorship problems?

LG: No, because most of the stuff was cleancut trade union or political stuff.

Ward: I mean, if you criticized the Big Five, would the radio station be breathing down your neck?

LG: No. Well, yes; we were supposed to make a preceding submission. I think it was more observed in the breach. It wasn't that much of a headache. One of the most interesting radio programs we ever had there was during the 1946 sugar strike.

But in answer to your question: in 1944 we won hands down on the question of the Hawaii Labor Relations Act. We used it to complete the organizing campaign -

Ward: In '45 - and just as the war was ending you were ready to go?

LG: We didn't have the single, merged local as yet, but in terms of having a framework of organization, leaders elected, a lot of good leadership developing, a real broad-scale campaign of organizing, of knowing what the hell we were trying to do, we had everything tuned up.

The Tension Rises

Ward: You had some problems with the eager beavers who wanted to strike right now, didn't you?

LG: Yes, there were a lot of hectic discussions. By the end of the war a number of our units were really practically full-fledged affairs. All we pushed for in 1945, at about the same time that the war was ending, was for an interim contract; we didn't feel that we could make the big push at that moment.

By that time the Hawaii Employers Council had been set up led by Jim Blaisdell. When we did sit down it was in what amounted to industry-wide negotiations; the 1945 agreement wasn't the biggest thing that ever came along, but at least it was a break-through in terms of recognition and without having to go to a strike.

Ward: Did you say something about the great informality with which that agreement was signed?

LG: No, it was the longshore agreement.

Ward: Oh, signing on the garbage pail?

LG: Right, yes, that was the longshore agreement down there in 1945.

Ward: Did you negotiate it, or Harry?

LG: I did that time. At least it recognized the re-organization of the Longshore Union. Remember, we had won an NLRB election for the Hawaii Longshoremen and had an initial agreement just before the war broke and the military took over.

The union was revived very, very quickly because of the basic core of leadership I guess - we must have had more pure Hawaiians in the ILWU than in any other section of industry. Hawaiians had been very prominent in longshore work over the years; very strong, big men like Julian Napunoa, Freddy Kamahoahoa, Benny "Big Nose" Kahaawinui, Levi Kealoha, Harry Komoko.

LG: The number of Hawaiians we had, I think indicated something more than just organization. How deep it was, I don't know; even guys like Joe Kealaleo -

Ward: A special link between union organization and the Polynesian tradition?

LG: I think they saw it as a fight for what the Hawaiians thought they had been cheated out of; that feeling went very, very deep. Let me give you a story and you'll just have to interpret the thing as best you can.

We had a store front as I told you right across from the docks in Honolulu, not very far from Pier 11. One of the organizers was Freddy Kamahoahoa. He'd been a longshoreman and he must have been one of the strongest men I ever met in my life; also a bit disturbed at times; one of the things he could not do is drink.

Ward: Although he tried?

LG: Yes, every once in a while because I recall one day as I was approaching the office the two girls we had working there, Betty Bristow and Pauline Rosenthal were outside. I said, "What's the matter?" And they said, "You better not go in there; Freddy's in there and he's not in good shape; he's taken over the back part of the office and he's been rearranging a lot of things". I said, "Well, I'll go in and see if I can talk to Freddie." The store had been divided so that we had a little office in front and a small meeting hall in back where we could get together after work with some of the key guys.

So, I go back there and sit down on a chair. Freddie was a very good calligrapher and he had been writing out things in Hawaiian. He had gone to the Kamehameha School and he knew Hawaiian very well, spoke and wrote it beautifully, and here he was writing these slogans or statements across the back of the auditorium.

There was a blank wall there and he had several of these great big wicker chairs with the high backs to them; where he had gotten them, I don't

LG: know. So, I said, "Gee, that's good work, Freddie." At first he was looking at me very suspiciously. "You like the work I'm doing here, huh?" "Yes, it's beautiful", I said, "I think it's fine. I don't know what it means, I wish I did. Unfortunately, I don't know any Hawaiian."

"Well, I'll explain to you - this is what we need here when we have the king and queen again." I think it was going on through his head that he was going to help restore the monarchy, even though it was the monarchy itself that, after all, had done in a lot of Hawaiians.

Ward: And sold out to the missionaries?

LG: Sure. I think what was coming out of his system was the fact that they had lost the islands to the missionaries and to the haoles and they wanted them back. They saw the union as the first effective fighting organization to come along.

These Hawaiians at various times dropped off by the wayside, but never for non-union reasons; whether it was because they felt the union had done as much as it could - couldn't swing it or . . . .

Ward: I was going to ask you: does that yearning for the monarchy still obtain among the Hawaiian union members?

LG: Not that it's expressed that way. I've never sat down with any groups and said, "Look, one of the things we've got to do is restore the monarchy." But their feelings about the haoles in some cases can be pretty brutal - they have a big contempt for them. Their feelings about the land - no question that there is still deep, deep resentment for what went on.

Ward: I've reason to believe that white children have trouble going to school because of the resentment against the haoles.

LG: There was a lot of resentment between the local guys and the navy and the army, the guys who were there on "rest and recreation." There were all

LG: kinds of fist fights. If, for example, some army and navy men out for a good time would wander into one of their areas, bars where Hawaiians would hang out, they would just find some reason to dump a sailor or a soldier.

Ward: Isn't it true that Hawaiians have a lot of trouble with drinking?

LG: Not true. Some of them did and some of them didn't, just like anybody else. A lot of Hawaiians I knew didn't drink at all or they drank moderately; some would drink an enormous amount of beer.

I remember a party that the guys put together for me when I was staying at the Niumalu Hotel on my birthday. I had been spending an awful lot of time in the Islands and I had this room that was right on the floor level and you walked out on to a grass plot.

The guys figured well no use Lou having a party by himself on his birthday, so they borrowed some instruments and other people's girl friends and gathered up some booze and came out. It became quite a shindig - a lot of fun and a lot of singing.

People started wandering in from hotels further up the strip to watch the Hawaiians carry on. It was really a hell of a good party with a lot of Hawaiian songs, a lot of their working class songs. An amazing sight to watch some of these guys over 200 pounds do the hula.

Ward: You mean the old-fashioned hula?

LG: The old-fashioned hula with the greatest of grace; nothing very fast, no big ass-shaking stuff. It was different. Abe Maunakea, a great big Hawaiian - he must have weighed close to 300 pounds, a big man in all directions - didn't drink with the others.

He took a case of beer and went over to a wooden fence between where I stayed and Jack Hall's house on the beach, where Jack lived with Yoshiko (his wife) and their kids.

LG: The next morning I happened to go out and saw that Abe Monakea, every time he finished a can of beer, he'd set it down, and he finally formed a pyramid. This guy had gone through two cases of beer. I guess he was unloading the by-product against the fence. (laughter) Can you imagine some guy going through two cases of beer? And I recall him saying goodnight and you would never think he was drunk.

Ward: So, now, we're getting along toward the 1946 sugar strike, I guess.

LG: Yes, '45 was a holding operation and we got the initial agreement in sugar; we got an agreement in longshore. Hilo was always well organized.

Ward: That was where the whole thing began, really?

LG: I think that was the first local of the ILWU in Hawaii; they're the ones who had gone through the 1938 inter-Island strike. Jack got organization completed in Port Allen, where he had gone through a ten-month strike in 1940; and Nauwiliwili, that was the port close to Port Allen.

Kahului on Maui was organized, even though there was a very rough cat there by the name of Buster Burnett. He was the labor relations man in charge of Kahului railroad. Kahului railroad also controlled the port.

Stories About A Wobbly

LG: He and Frank Thompson got into some real ass-tangling affairs because Frank would not back away from anybody. He was just that kind of a guy. When we first sent Frank down there - I don't know whether I mentioned the fact that we couldn't get plane space for him so we sent him down as a member of the Marine Cooks and Stewards.

He worked on board the ship and when it got to Hawaii, he said, "Pay me off as best you can." You don't get your full pay because they hold back,

LG: but he got off with whatever dough he could. He gets off - he knows there is martial law - he walks up to the office of the military governor and introduces himself, slaps his union book on the desk and says, "I'm here now, what are you going to do about it?" He wouldn't wait for anybody to say to him, "You can't come in here because of martial law." Frank was that kind of a guy; he and Buster Burnett tangled ass over in Kahului.

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Ward: Now, Burnett and Thompson -

LG: We organized the railroad there and we found we had to go through the Railway Labor Act. The experience with that, if anything could drive you nuts, that's it. We did okay there and we had the main port of Kahului well organized - Buster Burnett later became a good friend of the ILWU, oddly enough. At first he was very bitter about it.

Ward: What was he? Labor relations guy for somebody?

LG: Right. And he was also a pretty competent employer. He ran the dairy as well as the Kahului railroad. After all, that whole section of Maui was under the control of Alexander Baldwin.

Ward: He was their man -

LG: Their man. I remember during that time going up and visiting Asa Baldwin - he was one of the descendants of the Baldwin family. Just curious, that's all; who the devil we were and what we were like.

Burnett was tough. Later on he decided the job we had done was really worthwhile. He became a very good friend of Jack Hall's and myself. The only testimonial dinner arranged for him when he retired was done by the ILWU, years later. But Frank of course was not going to tolerate any stalling, didn't waste any time on aloha.

LG: I was stuck down there over the holidays and I sort of connect that with the Fair Labor Standards Act suit we had going. Anyway, Frank and I decided we'd spend New Year's Eve together and we ran into a whole series of parties. We had more than our share and there had been some Chinese girl at one party whom I had gotten into a conversation with, something she said about Chiang-Kai-Chek that I didn't like.

I was talking about the Long March (a key episode in the Chinese revolution); she had no use for that. I had been reading about developments in China, about the movement of Mao Tse Tung; Chu Teh was our hero. I kept brooding about this, but we got back to Frank's house just about dawn. I said, "We really have to straighten these people out; you have some records here, do you have Chi Lai?"

Ward: What?

LG: Chi Lai; you remember, Paul Robeson did a record on that. It was one of the songs being used by the Chinese Red Army. Yes, Chi Lai - "Forward", I think it means. He said, "Yeah, I've got that record." So we gather up his record player and this record, Chi Lai, and a case of beer and start walking down the street towards Waikiki. I was staying at the old Moana Hotel.

I had the address where this girl was staying and we get there and we find an outside plug. We plug in the phonograph and put on Chi Lai. Finally, we were told by the neighbors we had better move. So, we pick up the phonograph and thought we might as well walk down to my hotel.

So, we're walking down - and we meet the man who was in the military government, a brigadier general. I got to know him fairly well, but not on a business basis. He didn't know much about the army, he just had the title. As far as he was concerned, he was just interested in having a good time. He didn't see any problem in serving out the war in Honolulu.

LG: As we were walking along the street, he suddenly comes out in his scivvies. He had parked his car in the middle of the street. He'd had quite a night of it. He said, "Where are you going?" "We're going over to the Moana Hotel." He said, "I'd just as soon come along, have you got any good records there?" I said, "Yeah, we've got several records and we'll play them."

So, we get back to the Moana Hotel; Frank decided he ought to go to sleep. So, the general and myself were playing these records. He said, "Oh, they ought to be played louder." There was no air conditioning. We opened up all the windows in the room and here we are blaring away first thing in the morning.

Pretty soon, there's some MPs (military police) at the door. The general says, "You just tell anybody that's complaining to shut up." That was the end of that incident.

The other incident I was going to tell you about Frank. In 1946 he was still there. Frank did quite a stretch for us there. If you ever get a chance, you ought to read some of his reports. They're priceless - very thorough, not only names, places, details, dates, who's what, how they think and amazingly good judgment in almost all cases.

Anyway, you could tell Frank was getting a bit irritated about the whole stretch he's had in Hawaii by 1946. I went down there somewhere around the middle of '46 and it looked as though we were going to head for trouble because the sugar contract was open and there was no way of seeing how we could get the things we wanted without a battle.

Frank was thoroughly convinced we could win it. He said, "The job has been done, these people will stick - one thing you don't have to worry about, they're not going to break ranks on you." And he'd picked something up among the Japanese. "Don't worry about us, we know what it is to sacrifice." And they saw it that way.

LG: He wasn't even concerned about the new group of Filipinos who were brought in a couple of months before the strike took place. Most of them were signed up on the ship coming over to Hawaii. We had some men put to work on the ship and when these men were being transported on the old Maunawili they were being signed up; depending on what plantation they were assigned to, told how to go find the union. So, they were well organized by the time they got off the vessel.

And he says, "You know, if I have one more teriyaki steak, I'm just going to jump out the window." Frank was always strictly a steak and potato man, but teriyaki steak and rice had finally gotten to him.

So I said, "Frank, I don't want to get into an argument with you on this, but promise me one thing at least, that you will talk to me before you leave; everybody here realizes we're heading for trouble. You have so much at stake and the union has so much at stake, we sure as heck shouldn't take any chances. And you might have to stay on and see this battle through." He said, "Well, that's another thing." I said, "Well, at least promise me you'll talk to me before you take off." He said, "Okay, you have my promise on that." And the strike, I think, was only two days old so that had to be some time around September -

Ward: About 1946.

LG: Forty-six - when I get a call and it's Frank. I say, "Gee, it's good to talk to you, Frank, I haven't seen you for a few days." He said, "Remember, you and I talked months ago and I told you that I wouldn't leave here until I talked to you first." And I said, "Yes, and I appreciate that." And he said, "Well, I thought I ought to talk to you before I leave."

I said, "You want to come by the office?" He said, "No, I can't do that - they're calling the plane right now," and said, "Goodbye." He had talked to me and that was it! He took off.

(Interview 14: 16 May, 1978)

The Pre-Strike Legal Victory

Ward: Now, about that lawsuit that you were interested in.

LG: Let me describe to you what the suit was all about. You recall that during the war Jack Hall worked for the Fair Labor Standards Act in Hawaii. I'm not sure exactly how long he worked for them because Hawaii went under martial law very quickly after Pearl Harbor.

Finally martial law was knocked off by the very courageous judge there, Delbert Metzger; marvelous old guy who later testified for Jack in the Smith Act (anti-Communist) trial. He was a character witness; he was very fond of us. I got to know Delbert Metzger much later. He was well in his eighties when I knew him.

Ward: I remember; he was entertained over here.

LG: That's right and Symonds - you know, one of our lawyers down there -

Ward: Meyer Symonds.

LG: Meyer Symonds and Metzger got to be very good friends; Meyer would stop by to see him at least once a week. And he told a hilarious story about the judge.

The judge was cited for reckless driving, not driving fast, but driving erratically. Meyer asked, "What actually happened; are you going to pay the fine?" And the judge said, "I guess I ought to, really." "Why", asked Meyer. "Do you think you were guilty of reckless driving?" He says, "Only after a fashion; there was a very attractive lady sitting next to me and I put my hand on her knee and I guess I wasn't paying too much attention to my driving." In his eighties!

LG: He was quite a vigorous old goat and a delightful character. But that is just an aside.

When Jack was with the Fair Labor Standards Act, he reached the conviction there were innumerable violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act by the plantations. There was no great problem in terms of the mills themselves. The employers realized the mills where you grind the cane are clearly covered by the 40-hour week provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

On the other hand, there were an endless number of borderline operations. Let me give you an example. There's a truck driver who takes a big rig of sugar out of the field to the mill. Is he covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act or is he excluded because of the agricultural exemption?

Take the large number of people we had working around the camps. They did everything from building the houses, repairing them, painting them, carpenter work, plumbers and what have you. Were they covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act or were they under the agricultural section? Maintenance men, for example, out in the fields in all kinds of equipment would be a problem.

So, there were a whole series of questions that Jack was convinced were clear and outright violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and that the obligation of the employers would be enormous. The method used to value perquisites for Fair Labor Standard Act compliance purposes was another major factor.

Jack was the one who suggested that this suit be filed; we used the attorneys for the International. They were Gladstein, Andersen, Resner and Sawyer. The actual preparation of the material, knowing the operation, was obviously done by Jack. It would have taken the attorneys months to go out in the fields and study each one of the operations separately, whereas to Jack, all these things were at his fingertips.

Obviously the thing to do was to pick the strongest cases first; those would be where you have a very thick interlocking between the

LG: plantation and the mill. In those days a great deal of sugar was still being transported by rail and they had these tiny plantation railroad lines. Were they agricultural or were they industrial?

Ward: Were they under the Railway Labor Act?

LG: Whether they came under the Railway Labor Act was another story again, you see. As a matter of fact, in one place, you had a separate railroad, the Kahului Railroad. There we had to go through the Railway Labor Act. Later on, the railroad was washed out and they went to trucking, which made much more sense because the rails were too difficult to get into all kinds of corners.

Sometimes it meant bringing the cane down by flume, as they did on the Hamakua coast; they'd build these flumes going clear up into the hills. The cane would come flying down through these flumes with water almost as far as the mill, and there were some jobs there that were terribly dangerous.

The guys were hardly paid anything at all, such as the carpenter work that went on, building bridges across these arroyos. These flumes in some cases were built, oh, I'd say, to a height of 200 or 300 feet, all on gravity flow. Of course, the stuff would require repair and here you'd see someone repairing one of those flumes and he looked like a tiny little midget up there trying to do his carpenter work under some very risky conditions.

Well, again, that would be the question, "What is this man? Is he an agricultural worker or an industrial worker who is building a flume?" After all, if you take an industrial worker and put him to work building a sugar mill, that doesn't make him an agricultural worker, or if he's building a road that doesn't make him an agricultural worker; he's an industrial worker covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

So, Jack is the one who put together the basic ingredients for the suit. The suit then was filed against all the plantations, all of the Big Five, by our attorneys in San Francisco. The whole

LG: thing was on some sort of contingency basis. As to whether it was too much, too little, we didn't pay much attention at the time.

Somewhere close to the holidays in 1945 I got a wire from the employers, and also a wire from Jack Hall, saying that the employers wanted to sit down and discuss a settlement of the suit. I remember managing somehow to get transportation down there, even though it was still very difficult. It might have been that same period when I was stuck down there with Frank Thompson and began to make the rounds on New Year's Eve.

Jack and I met and discussed the question as to what would be a fair settlement. We weren't quite sure, but we said, it ought to be something over a million dollars, because the potential liability of the employers is enormous. For years they had been working certain of these people anything from 48 hours to 50 hours.

The bookkeeping work would be unbelievable; the total liability, if they were covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, would run into millions and millions of dollars. So, even though a million bucks sounded like an awful lot of money, we felt that there ought to be something more than that.

We held our meeting with the employers about a day or two before Christmas, and there the employers offered us a half a million dollars to settle the suit. Jack and I just looked at each other and didn't call a huddle. I said, "Look, as far as I'm concerned, you brought me down here on false pretenses, you brought me down here saying you were interested in the settlement of the suit and you're wrecking my holiday season.

"Obviously this is not an attempt to settle at all, so goodbye; I'm catching the first plane out of here, as soon as I can get myself priority." And we walk out. And the committee all agrees with us - there were a number of rank and filers in there.

LG: The next day we get a call from the employers saying, "Well, we've been looking at the thing and we want to discuss it further." So, we went back to another meeting with the employers and they raised the ante to $750,000; again we told them the same thing, that was just no settlement; we'd just as soon see the thing go to court. We've got a good case; if we lose, we lose; we had nothing to lose in the first place.

Frank Thompson was around at that session because I remember we walked out of this session after telling the employers that they could forget their $750,000 and I was going through my pockets and didn't have any money with me. I said, "Frank, do we have enough for coffee?" Frank always carried dough. So, here we were, just rejected three-quarters of a million dollars and here we were trying to get a dime for coffee!

Once again, the employers asked for a meeting, indicating that perhaps they would settle the thing for the round figure of a million. Dick (Richard) Gladstein was down there at the time. Sure, when the employers began to offer a million dollars, the thing was tempting. It looked very big to our guys in the sugar plantations. Here we were talking about wages in the plantations that were as low as 24 cents an hour and here's a million dollars; although a million dollars spread across a lot of men isn't all that much.

One of the things that was bothering us in the union - the union I'm talking about, not the attorneys - was the distribution of the money. You'd be in a hell of a jam because obviously not all the workers would be entitled to it. If we could lower the distribution problem on the backs of the employers, fine; then if something was done wrong, the union could take the position: those sons-of-bitches are still trying to screw you.

But the employers had already mentioned that if the settlement was made we would take on the responsibility for the distribution, or at least the determination of it. We weren't too jubilant about it, but we could see how that could very easily be the problem we'd have if we finally got a settlement.

LG: There's where I think you picked up the story that there were some sharp differences between myself and Richie Gladstein.

Ward: They still talk about it.

LG: Yes, I wouldn't be a bit surprised. I don't talk about it because it finally worked out. But at the moment, of course, I was extremely unhappy because I found out that Richie had been talking to some of our guys on the committee, without consulting either Jack or myself, that if the employers offered a million dollars, perhaps they ought to take it.

I can see where the attorneys would think that was a hell of an attractive settlement because of their contingency fee - that's a lot of money. In those days, that was the biggest case I guess the attorneys had ever had. The attorneys were entitled to a fee, of course, even if you wanted to call it a windfall. After all, over the years they had been a pretty loyal bunch and they had done a good job. They handled everything from the Bridges' cases to a lot of the strike situations and everything else we got mixed up in. But caucusing our guys - that was a no-no. You don't do that.

Words got very sharp; some of the guys said, "What are you going to do when they get to a million bucks?" I said, "We're going to turn it down." I said, "The way these guys have moved so rapidly from that lousy half million they started with and within a couple of days, they're up to a million, there's a hell of a lot more money there." They said,"Gee, you're going to risk the million."

I said, "So what, you ain't got it, have you? If you don't have it, you have nothing to lose." It's like the business of people telling you that if you go on strike you lose so much money. How can you lose something you never got? You didn't work. Sure it takes a certain form of thinking, but it's still a correct form of thinking. Otherwise, you never make a move.

LG: Jack and I were very firm with Richie. We said, "Knock it off, we're the ones who'll settle this, that's all; if we say 'no', it's 'no.'" The net result was that we finally got the employers up to a million and a half dollars plus the attorney fees. So, we picked up a million and a half bucks for distribution to the workers.

By that time even the attorneys realized that the union was entitled to a hunk of this money. Jack was the one who not only conceived the thing but had the information and the material to put the damn thing together. And to think they could have done it without him, I doubt it.

Ward: I want to ask a question here. Are you sure the contingency fee agreed upon was 30 percent? I heard it was 10 percent.

LG: No - no. It couldn't be 10 percent.

Ward: That's the story I got.

LG: Well, the reason I don't think it was 10 percent is because when the case was settled for a million and a half, the union got $150,000 and the attorneys got $150,000. That would be 20 percent of a million and one-half dollars; $300,000, right?

Ward: What became of the rest of it?

LG: It was distributed to the workers.

Ward: Oh, I see. This is interesting because the story I got was that the settlement was for two million dollars and that the contingency fee was for ten percent which would have been $200,000.

LG: I don't recall the settlement being at two million - it was a million and a half, plus the $300,000.

Ward: That could be checked on, I suppose?

LG: Yes, no problem at all. I recall when I got back to San Francisco I was still steaming about this thing; an awful lot of argument going. The guy who seemed most amenable to trying to work the

LG: thing out was George Andersen. He and I continued friends. Andersen, of course, always liked a buck; his whole background was one of extremely hard work; not penury, but he sure was prudent with his money, to put it gently.

I do know we distributed the million and a half bucks to the workers involved. Then we got part of the attorneys' fees, because even they realized that we had gotten a good deal more than what they were prepared to settle for. If they thought we ought to grab a million, obviously they shouldn't be entitled to any fee on dough we got over a million. It was a roundy-go-roundy and it wasn't very friendly, I'll admit.

Mostly I was tee'd off about what I thought was much more important to us than the money. You don't go over the head of the union, that I know. The figure of $150,000 to the union sticks at the back of my head.

Both the suit and the money then keeps popping up in funny ways and just let me tell you about the follow-up on some of these things. That money was used later to buy the land on which 451 Atkinson Drive was built - the ILWU headquarters in Hawaii.

Ward: That's where the taro patches used to be.

LG: I'm not sure whether they were taro patches or part of a swamp area.

Ward: Well, I was in that hall 19 years ago when it was quite new and thinking it was about where the streetcar from Honolulu used to come through the taro patches on its way to Waikiki.

LG: That could very well be. Have you been in Hawaii since they built that huge Ala Moana Shopping Centre, the biggest shopping centre in the world?

Ward: I was there 19 years ago.

LG: No, it wasn't built then; but the land on which the Ala Moana shopping centre is built was swamp-land. They wanted a yacht harbor, not too far away.

LG: Dillingham, one of the big corporations in Hawaii, now an international building corporation, got the contract to clear the coral to open up a yacht harbor. For years every time you drove by that area, you could hear these pumps going; they were going all night. He got so much a yard for digging out the coral, bought this swampland for almost nothing - took the coral out, filled in the swampland, and got one of the most valuable hunks of real estate in Hawaii.

It has been built up enormously. For example, right across the street from the building is the Ala Moana Hotel, owned by American Airlines, I think. It's about 36 stories high. There are two twin towers built on the other side of Atkinson Drive and they go up to around forty stories. Here we have a modest building four stories high, and it looks dwarfed by everything built around it.

Ward: It's pretty obvious that the $150,000 went for the land for that building.

LG: Later, later - that's a story by itself. The reason I filled that in for you is because it became an element later in the sugar strike. We held on to that money; we didn't buy any land with it at the time. We used that dough, in part, for helping to run the strike.

Ward: In '46?

IX A TEST OF UNION STRENGTH

Striking On The Big Five's Money

LG: In '46 - sure, not too long after the settlement. We had a couple of growls back from the plantations; some guys got more money than others, but generally they accepted the idea that the union knew what it was doing, that somewhere along the line there would be a showdown, that the union would make demands, particularly in terms of changing the whole sugar industry.

That money was used for all kinds of purposes during the strike. We lent it to some of the units that needed dough. They all set up soup kitchens. One of the features of the 1946 strike in sugar was the soup kitchens which were set up in all the various plantations.

Most people would eat there, they would come down with their own utensils, take their food home to eat. But in many cases the families got to the point where it was more sociable and the kids enjoyed it more to be down there where everybody was eating together, so it became a real social thing.

Even before the strike began the guys had already begun planting vegetable gardens. By the time the strike got under way, almost every sugar unit had a crew of men and women working a vegetable garden. You had a crew assigned to the kitchen and the cooking. You had a crew assigned to hunting; they could still go into the hills there and get things like wild boar.

LG: You had a crew assigned to fishing; so that actually they had a better diet during the 1946 strike than they had during ordinary times. We had all kinds of good people helping out in plantation soup kitchens.

Every once in a while, Jack and I would make the rounds of the soup kitchens to talk to the members and see what the general feelings were like, whether the thing was holding together. This was all in addition to the picket duty, remember.

There was a bit of socialist competition as to who could turn out the best food for the lowest amount per head, with some of the plantations getting down to the range of under ten cents per person. And a fairly good meal at that -

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Ward: All right, so we were at the soup kitchens at 10 cents a meal or more.

LG: Right. It's true that most of the food that people bought in Hawaii is brought down from the mainland and is more expensive. For years you used to have an Island differential on things like Federal pay, army and navy; even civil service people would get an Island differential that applied for both Hawaii and Alaska.

But other than staples such as flour, condiments and a few other things that you have to buy, these plantations were just about self-sufficient. They have gone back to a primitive form of economy where you lived by your wits and by your hands and by your fishing and hunting.

They were doing extremely well; the kitchens were huge outdoor areas, sometimes with a tent on account of rain. Where they got these enormous kettles they cooked in, I don't know.

They were very ingenious. Every once in a while they'd get a real killing when some guy who ran cattle would find several had been lost, broken through fences. They would make a deal with the

LG: farmer; "Look, we'll get your cattle back if we get one." Of course, the guys would do their own slaughtering; they were very self-sufficient.

Some of our members would do share cropping - small farmers; there were a handful on Oahu, on the outside islands, a good many. Our guys would go out and say, "Okay, we'll give you a day's work, but we want a share." So, food was coming in from all directions; in a number of cases, small merchants helping out.

We had what we call "bumming committees." Sometimes you'd need a few nickels, say, for school lunches. Sometimes you could put enough pressure on the Board of Education to give the kids lunches; sometimes people were too proud and they just had to give the kids enough to buy the school lunches. But the atmosphere was good, around the schools and everywhere else.

Ward: Any strike-breaking attempts?

LG: Only on one plantation and that was Pioneer. That's a story by itself, where they fired some - I think it was nine or ten of our men, charging them with having beat up some supervisors who were trying to irrigate. That was resolved after the strike. When the strike was settled the workers at Pioneer Mill continued on strike for another 30 days. They wouldn't go back to work without the strikers who had been fired.

Ward: Did they win that one?

LG: Yes. That was sort of a peculiar case. Nate Feinsinger had been sent down there by the government. Feinsinger was the dean of the Wisconsin Law School, and he was used on special assignment by the Labor Department as a conciliator. He got to be a fairly good friend of ours over the years.

Feinsinger didn't get any place; neither did the federal conciliator who was sent down, Stanley Von White. I finally found out what the "V" stood for. Stanley was a heck of a good man and a very honest guy, straight as a die. He tried like the devil to get negotiations under way.

LG: There's a sort of amusing story. Stanley White decided he ought to try to convene a session of the parties and we were perfectly happy to be there. I felt we wouldn't find a situation where the mediator was leaning on us.

You know, this is something you have to watch in every mediation session; apparently their basic order of instructions is that they should look around and see which is the weakest party, and then lean on him. As long as the thing is settled, it is a victory for the Labor Department. It might not be a victory for the workers, or anybody else.

I wasn't concerned about that, but White set up the meeting for someplace in downtown Honolulu. Jim Blaisdell was there from the Employers' Council, and the man who was working with him was Dwight Steele. He had been Blaisdell's successor with the Distributors Association in San Francisco.

Ward: There was a lot of respect between the two parties?

LG: Yes. Steele was a little more difficult, and Blaisdell could be a first class mean character when he got going. He saw the thing in very simple terms. He didn't see any good reason to have an Employers Council launch a crusade to destroy the unions. On the other hand, he felt it was his job to represent the employers, and he did it well. As an individual, he was really a very likeable guy; at least I enjoyed his company.

Ward: Well, there was mutual respect anyway.

LG: Yes - he had known me, and so did Dwight Steele, from the mainland.

Ward: Well, anyway, White wanted to get you together.

LG: He got us together at some downtown place, the Commercial Club. It was an odd experience because he decided that perhaps a few drinks might help loosen everybody up; you know, the usual bullshit. Of course, getting a decent bottle of booze there was -

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(Interview 15: 23 May, 1978)##

Ward: We are continuing with your account of a preliminary attempt at negotiations by Stanley White between the employers' representatives in Hawaii and Goldblatt and Jack Hall. Lou, what happened? The liquor didn't do any good, I gather.

LG: Stanley White brought three bottles of Four Roses. Blaisdell, obviously, was not ready to do any serious talking. It could also mean that his general attitude, and that of the Employers Council, could have been that they weren't terribly interested in having any outside party, whether it be the Federal Mediation Service or what have you, inject themselves into the situation.

Ward: They resented White?

LG: I wouldn't say they were terribly fond of him. As a matter of fact, Terry and I got to know White and his wife and their boys quite well afterwards.

Ward: I remember, we met him.

LG: Here's Stan White sitting in the middle of this room. Steele and Blaisdell on one side, Jack Hall and myself on the other side. Clearly, of course, we were at an impasse. Blaisdell takes one look at this little card table that had been set up with the three bottles and Stan was sort of a little bit edgy trying to get things going and Blaisdell broke the ice by saying, "What the devil, is it just one dozen roses?"

Anyway, nothing much came of this session. The Four Roses got down to substantially less than a dozen. We finally broke up the session around 8:00 or 8:30 at night and we left this place which is right across from the police station.

Steele remarked he used to ride one of these things, these motorcycles. I think either Jack or I said, "Well, in that case here's one you can ride." And here he was about to get on the

LG: motorcycle when the cop whose motorcycle it happened to be came out of the station, spotted us and hauled us into the station house, with Stanley White, of course, jogging along and terribly, terribly upset.

After all, he had set up the meeting and he had responsibility for the secure passage of the participants. Here he was, running around: Could he talk to the captain? Could he talk to the sergeant who was in charge? After all, he was with the Federal Mediation Service and this was all a big misunderstanding; there was nothing serious about this.

And finally, the cops caught on to what was going on and said, "Okay, just take off." We were standing there; Blaisdell and Steele had gone one way and we were about to go the other; I turned to White and told him, "You missed one of the greatest chances a mediator ever had." "What's that, now, Lou," he said. "I do my best in this thing."

"Oh, Stanley, I know that and I like you very much," I said, "But imagine an opportunity like that, what if you had worked something out with the captain or sergeant, or whoever you were talking to, to the effect that you would leave Blaisdell and Steele in one cell and Jack and myself in another cell until such time as the public forced us to sit down and settle." That would certainly have been a new twist to the role of mediator. Stan didn't think that was terribly funny. He took the whole thing very seriously.

Ward: This took place at about thirty days and the strike actually lasted sixty seven?

LG: Something like that. It was about midway. And Stan later issued a good statement at which the employers took a lot of umbrage; he was <u>persona non grata.</u>

The Mediation Service finds itself in a very difficult situation if they step into any scene and either party says, "Get this character out of here." Then he's lost his value right then and

LG: there, and particularly in the case of Hawaii. I am sure the Mediation Service knew what the devil they were dealing with, that enormous, concentrated economic control.

So, Stan finally left there. The man who was outspoken in Stan's defense was W.K. Bassett. Bassett was a fine, upstanding progressive who put out a paper down around Pacific Grove or Monterey or Carmel, the Pacific Sun.

Later on, he wound up in Hawaii as an assistant to Mayor John E. Wilson, in Honolulu. Mayor Wilson was and remained a good friend of the ILWU. Mayor Wilson was a very distinguished man; he had been responsible for building the first tunnel through the Pali that went from leeward to windward side. He was really thoroughly loved by the people down there. He was along in years and Bassett was his assistant.

Bassett made the statement that they ought to build a monument to Stanley White down at Fort and Merchant Streets; that was the main intersection of the financial district in Honolulu. Of course, the papers didn't take kindly to that idea.

Ward: You enumerated a couple of bargaining points the the employers were very worried about. One was 25 million dollars and the other was the union shop.

LG: Correct; we had a couple of items there which we ourselves did not take very seriously. They were not all that important to us if we got the rest of the things we wanted in the contract. One was a claim for 25 million bucks, a round figure that Jack just took off the top of his head, I guess. That's over and beyond the Fair Labor Standards Act suit which had been settled.

This was money that was still owed for many, many years of violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, particularly on the whole perquisite system. One of the things we were determined to get rid of was perquisites. The employers themselves were also moving in that direction because of the

LG: Fair Labor Standards Act suit; that resolved the immediate issue, and included certain agreements that were made between the union and the employers, namely, that there would be further legal action including continued appeal at the prerogative of the employers until such time as they got what they considered to be a final determination as to what was covered or not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Ward: I see.

LG: There's a rather significant point when I get around to telling you something about another facet of the Fair Labor Standards Act suit and how it happened to work out fortuitously to settle a very complicated legal situation we were in, namely, a suit by Juneau Spruce up in Alaska. It's an interesting story as to how they finally dovetailed.

So, we had this claim for twenty five million bucks on past violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Then there was the demand for the union shop - we knew full well the chances of getting a union shop were extremely slim. We would have been borrowing trouble for ourselves if we had actually won it.

Bear in mind, we were riding such a powerful movement in the plantations that it became a question of status in the community, your whole relation to your family, to your friends, even to a little business in the community, whether you were a union member or not.

On some plantations the men were using expressions which were completely unwarranted; some guy hadn't signed fast enough, they called him a scab. He obviously was not - he hadn't broken the strike or done anything of the sort. In some cases where guys might have been reluctant to join, when they finally got around to it, the union men said, "Well, we'll think about it." Or, "We'll figure out how much dues you owe." The union had such a prominent position on the plantation level that it became a basic requirement to an individual if he was going to get along on the job, in the community, with his friends and everything else. It had that kind of sweep to it.

LG: We'd raise the question on the union shop and some of the leaders in the units would say, "Look, why don't you just take care of your part of the thing; we'll take care of this local question." So, actually some of these issues were stalking horses.

We kept hammering away on the more basic things, namely, abolition of the perquisites system. What happens to perquisites once they are converted to cash? How do you classify the houses? What action do you take in the event of dissatisfaction with the way the house is maintained? What do you pay for medical care (which was supposedly free, while at the same time they were paying people 24 cents an hour)?

Ward: I think you should go into detail with what the perquisites had been, how the employers worked up a fallacious theory that these guys were getting something for nothing, when really they were not. What were the perquisites on the plantations?

LG: The perquisites on the plantation level included housing; that meant both family housing and dormitory housing. Single men, in the main, lived as a group within something that was closer to a dormitory; did their own cooking, and so forth. Family housing was family units; in many, many plantations the camps were separated along clear racial lines.

When you would go to some of the plantations, they would talk about the "Chinese camp" or the "Filipino camp" or the "Portuguese camp." It depended on when some of these workers had arrived. A number of the Portuguese had been early contract laborers; they had moved up into either higher labor grades or they had families and picked up better housing.

People at the bottom of the totem pole were obviously the last group of immigrant contract labor, mostly Filipinos. So, the question of converting perquisites to cash was complicated. How much is a perquisite worth to a family man with

LG: say a three or four bedroom house; how much are those same perquisites worth to a single man, sharing a dormitory with five other guys?

A basic question by itself; and with the conversion of perquisites had to come guaranteed wage increases, notwithstanding the dollar value attached to perquisites. Another perquisite was medical care.

Many of the plantations, almost all of them, had what they called a plantation doctor as well as a small clinic. In some cases those doctors were pretty good and loyal to their profession. In other cases, they were almost like remittance men.

Ward: Company-minded hacks?

LG: Company-minded hacks, including a number of guys who had been beaten by the booze and wound up on a plantation, you see. The quality of care varied a great deal, but we couldn't do too much about it at the time.

Later, we began to do more about the question of the quality of care, specialist care; provision to have people flown into Honolulu, because most of your specialists were concentrated there at the time. A third form of perquisite included things like firewood and in some cases, water.

Ward: Garbage disposal?

LG: Garbage disposal was also done by the plantation - whether that was considered a perquisite, I am not sure.

Ward: Transportation? Any transportation?

LG: No. Basic perquisites were housing, medical care, fuel, although in some cases the man paid his own fuel bill. In other cases, they were incorporated. It was a big headache in Hawaii's whole economy. All your fuel is generated by raw materials that are brought in from the outside. They have no natural gas. They have to produce their own electricity, so that fuel costs can be extremely high.

LG: Later on, as the standard of living improved, a lot of people bought electrical gadgets, and their fuel bills went up accordingly. Those are the main perquisites.

Also, the employers had to value these perquisites in such a way that, where they knew a job was covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, they attached a value to the perquisite so as to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum. There was always this question as to whether or not they had been valued properly.

Those were all part of the claim for $25,000,000; also part of the Fair Labor Standards Act suit. It was in these areas where Jack Hall was so amazingly knowledgeable.

I don't believe there was much of a fundamental resistance by the employers to getting rid of perquisites, but the manner in which they were gotten rid of, how the contract would be written, what grievance machinery would be provided in the whole area of perquisites - that was an enormous project.

The net result for example was that we got a guaranteed wage increase for every person; it was substantial, based on what the previous wages had been. We also got things in the contract like grievance machinery, recognition of vacations.

We began to formalize the question of what they were entitled to in the way of sick leave. For example, sick leave was an outgrowth of the perquisite system because the whole concept was that the worker had one big daddy and that was the employer.

The actual sick leave provisions were not too bad. This was a time when most of the contracts in the mainland had no sick leave provisions. There, the workers got two-thirds pay after, I think three days; the number of weeks they could collect depended on their length of service. You could go up to 54 days of sick leave. So, these had to be formalized.

Ward: Racial discrimination?

LG: Racial discrimination was a separate question; it was a very fundamental thing to the life of the contract. But let me give you a few examples of some of the things that finally emerged from the contract.

The 1946 sugar agreement when it was finally completed had all houses classified as "A", "B", "C" and "D". The best of all housing, as I recall, was at a plantation called Olokele; that's on the Island of Kauai. There they had comparatively new housing, all inside plumbing.

It was fairly attractive housing and I think the rents were $41 or $42 a month. Then, your housing went down into other categories including A's, B's amd C's, depending on whether they were single partitions or very few double partitions, inside plumbing or outside plumbing, certain electrical connections, etc. These were all a set of factors.

Now, I just have to drift a bit off the contract itself. Those rents that were put in the contract at the end of the '46 strike are still exactly as they were at that time; no change.

Ward: No increase?

LG: No increase. The employers tried several times to reopen the thing in terms of the cost of replacement or cost of repair. Our position was very simple; there was only one way to change the rents: they'd have to whip us in a strike.

When you stop to think of the importance of this, you begin to see how it runs to the whole heart of the plantation life. As soon as we had a strike victory and an effective union, our guys began to talk up. It was a legitimate grievance, for example, if a man said, "My house hasn't been painted for 15 years; have somebody out there to paint it, it's coming apart." Or the plumbing doesn't work, or what have you.

So, we had housing committees on every plantation. Employers got to the point where they said, "We'll give you all the supplies you want, go out

LG: and do the job yourself or get your friends." The men said, "No dice, we're not going to take the job of a union man; let him come out and do it." On the company's time.

Eventually, the company found itself completely frustrated, both on the matter of changing the rents and on repairs, which just kept piling up. The net result was that this was the single, motivating factor that forced the employers to let go of land.

The Passion For Land

LG: The land is the basic source of wealth in an island community. And the land ownership goes back a long ways. The Big Five never really began taking over the land until the adoption of the plan called the "Great Mehele".

Other things went with it too, such as fishing rights. There were all kinds of complicated things - what are called kunuiki rights, access to water, because some are dependent on fishing.

The fundamental thing in the Great Mehele was the determination of the ownership of land; then when the Big Five came along, with the missionaries who preceded them, they knew who they could deal with in terms of getting that land. A certain amount of the land was set aside for Hawaiian homesteads; some of that land still exists.

The attitude of the Hawaiians towards the whole question of land is so deep that it really reflects everything that has happened in Hawaii. Only a few years back a chap I've known for a long time, Jimmy Heen, was running for Assembly and his bumper stickers read "Restore the Monarchy." He knew who he was appealing to - those Hawaiians!

There's a story about this old friend of mine, Dan Haleamau, a longshoreman. He's retired now in Hilo and we were sitting around one night, just talking, and I said, "Where do you live?" And he

LG: said, "I live in a Hawaii homestead." I asked, "What's your rent?" He says, "One dollar a year." I said, "You paid up?" He said, "No, I haven't paid for the last ten years." His attitude was, they weren't giving him a goddam thing that wasn't his.

Well, getting a piece of fee simple land was almost impossible. The land was owned by the estates: Bishop Estate, Campbell Estate, the II Estate. Most of the undeveloped land that wasn't in their hands or plantations belonged to the federal government. This feeling, about fee simple land is one of the reasons why you get these unbelievable land prices in Hawaii.

If you think things are crazy around here it's nothing compared to what's going on down there. The attitude of the members was that they wanted to see land ownership change, but it had to be fee simple, not lease land.

I recall an incident that occurred some years after this - after '46 - where a man who was a fairly good builder here, William Blackfield, talked to me, "I'm going down to Hawaii and try to do some building. You guys have really been doing some organizing." I said, "Yeah."

He said, "You know, once I take a look-see at the place, maybe you'll be interested in some of the housing I put up." "Sure," I said, "We'd like to know." I've seen a lot of the housing people live in in Honolulu and it sure as heck is nothing to write home about. Pretty bad housing, a lot of them lived along River Street, and the Kalihi district (in Honolulu); small shacks, almost like warrens.

A couple of years later he got in touch with me and said, "I'm about to start some development just over the Pali," which is not too far from Honolulu proper, perhaps a twenty minute drive. By that time, things had improved a bit and I thought the families would be interested in some new housing. So, I asked, "What will it run?" And he said, "Well, a lot depends on whether your guys will buy this stuff in advance; then they

LG: know what they're getting and it makes it very easy for me to get interim financing, as well as FHA loans and what have you."

He was talking about a two bedroom, two bath house for $5,500. I said, "Is it on fee simple land?" He said, "No, it's a 55 year lease." What the hell, that doesn't make too much difference - how many people are going to be around 55 years from now on a lease?

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Ward: We were talking about the houses and the lease.

LG: The longshoremen all lived in the heart of Honolulu and, of course, a large number of cannery workers and others. I thought that was where the interest would be, so I raised this thing with a bunch of longshoremen; the interest was apparent, "That sounds pretty good. What would the down payment be?"

"I don't know all these things yet," I said. "All I know is that this guy can offer an awfully good package if this housing can be sold in advance. Obviously, we'll have to make sure that the housing is exactly the way he specifies it so that nobody gets cheated."

At that time I suppose a $5,500 house would have had monthly payments, including principal, taxes, interest, insurance, of somewhere around $55 a month.

Ward: What would a longshoreman be making, bringing home? About $300 a month?

LG: Thereabouts. Work was good. It was before the big container movement, so that wasn't the big problem. All the reactions were positive until one man - an Hawaiian - said, "We better find out something else, Lou, before we go any further. Is this fee simple land?" "No," I said. "It's a 55-year lease." "Forget it," he said.

LG: It was as though you had turned off a spigot; all the interest in this housing disappeared. Of course, five, six, ten years after that a lot of the guys were kicking themselves because housing costs in Hawaii are completely out of sight.

The idea of land ownership was such a sine qua non to the Big Five that exactly the same feeling - but for entirely different reasons - ran all through the society, particularly the Hawaiians. I think it was Woolworth or Kress spent around five years getting a piece of fee simple land in downtown Honolulu because it was the only way they wanted to move in there.

A lot of that has changed now, but you still have an enormous amount of lease land; some of the prize residential lands near Honolulu, places like Kahala; that's the area that goes beyond Diamond Head. That's all Bishop Estate land. Even some of the big employers just blow their cork. I remember Blaisdell one time practically screaming. He said, "My lease is up for renegotiation." He further said, "If I can't get a renegotiation that is satisfactory, I've got only one right left." I said, "What's that?" "I can pick up the house and move it." Where? And some of those houses, you couldn't pick up anyway because the termites would let go and the whole thing would fall apart.

Now, back to the question of what happened on the plantations. We had the rent control in the contract and it's still in there. It finally meant there was only one alternative left to the employers on the question of housing: sell it off or build new housing. And it would have to be fee simple.

Well, I recall being there when a group of guys were talking to Jack. These were some of the workers and some of the leadership from Waipahu. It's not very far from Honolulu, about 20 minutes; the big Waipahu plantation, it was right next to Ewa Sugar. Later they merged and it was called the Oahu Sugar Company, an American Factors plantation.

LG: These guys were raising the question with Jack as to whether they ought to buy the houses; the housing had been put up for sale and the first option was for the guy who lived there, the sugar worker. Jack knew a great deal more about this thing than I ever would know because he understood this housing thing.

I think the employers were asking somewhere around $4800 for some houses, $5000 for others. Jack says, "Look, I think there should be an extra push on this thing. If you guys hang tough you can pick up this housing at $4,000." And they did.

Some of it wasn't the best housing in the world, but the guys, of course, once they owned the house, it was another story. They began keeping them in good repair. A lot of it turned out to be very attractive housing. The big thing that happened there, of course, was the move to fee simple housing.

Some of our members also made some terrible mistakes because, as I recall, not too many years after these fellows in Waipahu picked up the housing, a lot of navy men who worked in Pearl Harbor, a couple of miles away, came along and offered a guy $40,000 for his house.

Well, $40,000 was a fabulous amount of money; the guy had never seen anything like it in his whole life. Some of them made the mistake of selling and then discovering that once you had the money, what the hell can you do with it? You still need a place to live. Most of the fellows thought it through pretty carefully and realized that you don't let go of what you are living in until you have something else.

But it also resulted in a certain amount of mobility in the plantation itself. Once the guys had fee simple housing, their attitudes could change in other ways. If the kids grew up and the guys decided they wanted a smaller place, they could get rid of the old place. On some of the other plantations as housing reached a certain age the companies, like on Maui, built a place

LG: called Dream City. It's concrete block construction and attractive housing, very attractive; fairly decent sized lots, up to 8,000 to 10,000 square feet. They were beautifully kept up in almost every case. The men had also built outdoor living areas. They had carports which became part of a patio arrangement for outdoor eating, entertaining their friends and so forth because the weather lends itself to that.

The Dream City housing ran about $5,000 or $6,000 to start. I remember a place like Pioneer Mill over on the Island of Maui, a few years later, and they ran around $15,000 or $14,000; some of my good friends live there.

Yet, I remember visiting the same plantation some years later. Terry and I went down there for some rest. I decided to drop by and see an old timer who used to be very cantankerous and almost impossible in negotiations. They kept calling him a kamakaze.

It's on an old, broken down road, practically boulders in the middle of it; the guy I'm with said, "This is where Micaiso lives." I said, "Fine, let's go in." Micaiso was completely taken aback - I had never visited his house before.

He had just gotten back from work, hadn't even cleaned up yet. He found a bottle of Scotch or something, because your Japanese are very hospitable people, and he says, "Oh, not too bad, he says, "Still something lousy." I asked, "What's that?" "Too much work and too much money." He didn't like the hours - the guys were putting in ten hours a day, sometimes six or seven days a week. He says, "Contract's good, okay, it's all right, but too much work."

And here's a machinist, a skilled craftsman - "How come you're still living in the same plantation house?" And that's what it was, still covered by the rents in the contract! He said, "Oh, maybe I should have bought one of the others earlier; I just didn't feel like it." I guess as

LG: far as he was concerned, his attitude was that he'd rather be in a plantation house, rely on the power of the union, than go out on the free market.

Ward: Afraid he might be outsmarted by other people?

LG: He had confidence in the union and he'd been through the thing long enough. There were always a real bunch of rebels up there, that is at Pioneer Mill. Pioneer Mill is in Lahaina on the island of Maui. Some old timers around there still talk about Big Bill. Big Bill by the way is Bill Bailey, the longshoreman.

Ward: I didn't know he was down there.

LG: He was down there on a ship, I guess taking on sugar. For some reason or other he went out to Lahaina; a big banyan tree there. The guys still remember his speech calling for a Soviet America. (laughter) Bill, you know, was one of the most amazing guys; he fought in Spain.

I'll never forget; another guy came back from Spain, and of course he was pretty well lionized. Bill came back and found out about this. He says, "Yeah, that guy is a real hero; both of us figured out that this farmer must have had some wine in in his cellar, and we were crawling through a small opening to get some of this wine and this character got shot in the ass!" You know Bill was the guy who climbed the mast of a German training ship right after Hitler came into power?

Ward: Yes.

LG: Imagine climbing that mast and tearing down the Nazi flag with all those Nazis waiting on the deck below. They really worked him over.

Smashing Racial Discrimination

LG: Another fundamental thing that we fought for in the 1946 sugar agreement was a provision for no racial discrimination. This was a big thing on

LG: the Mainland, of course, and initially we assumed there shouldn't be any headache with it. To the contrary, it became a very contentious issue. As we moved along in these discussions I began to realize why. These plantations had this facade of complete racial equality, you know, the aloha spirit in Hawaii, but that wasn't even a half-truth.

The fact of the matter was that you not only had the pecking order, depending on when the workers had been brought in as contract laborers, there was an unwritten rule that every job, beginning with the first grade of supervision, what they called lunas, were all held by haoles. There were a few exceptions, but they were the rare ones, let me tell you.

We just took a non-discrimination clause for granted - after all, the whole union had been built that way. The question of integrating the people on the plantation was so essential to putting together any kind of effective fighting machine, and the employers saw our anti-discrimination drive as a move to open a wedge in managerial control, even though we did not have lunas in the union.

In some plants on the mainland we had the foremen in the union. In the case of the water-front, you've got the walking bosses, who are substantially above a gang foreman. Not there; we never managed to get the lunas in. There was an awful battle on anti-discrimination and we finally won that clause.

Now, your local foremen are a pretty thoroughly mixed group of Japanese, Filipinos, Hawaiians and what have you. There has been a general moving up. After years went by this began to penetrate into the Big Five, where some of the men in charge of industrial relations for these same sugar plantations are not haoles; people like Ed Wong, Chinese.

He is a vice-president now in Alexander-Baldwin, a man who really has the ambition to be the first Chinese head of an agency. I don't know whether his family ever came off the plantation; he is at least third or fourth generation American. I know that at one time his family lived down

LG: somewhere around River Street and he even knew some of the people who grew up in the same area - guys like Joe Kealaleo and Sook Moon.

The interesting thing is that these breakthroughs occurred as a by-product against racial discrimination; a man like Mits Fukuda; he's a Japanese, and an officer now at Castle and Cooke, I believe.

Ward: Someone else became an industrial relations man?

LG: Right. Harold Hee is an industrial relations man for Brewer; obviously of Chinese background. Sugar was a very successful strike. We emerged with a good, solid, well-organized union.

Ward: When you got through with that strike, about how many members did the ILWU have, all told, in the Hawaiian Islands?

LG: Well, at the time of the 1946 sugar strike, the industry I think had begun to pass its peak. During the early organizing days there were something like twenty-five or twenty-six thousand sugar workers, but even during this period you had the beginnings of mechanization. There is no question that in many ways the union itself pushed this mechanization ahead.

My own feeling is that you can never get any basic improvement in agriculture without mechanization; there is nothing socially uplifting about hand-cutting cane. It's just a dirty, messy and terribly tough job. The employers themselves I think realized that the union was not going to stand still; we were going to continue to push for wages and other benefits, which we have, so that our members are the highest paid agricultural workers in the country, if not in the world.

The employers were, in effect, pushed into mechanization, which meant finding ways and means of taking the laborious hand-processing and changing that to mechanical harvesting; instead of the flume in transportation to begin to get roads and turna-haulers and things of that sort.

LG: As to how many members we had at that particular moment, I'd say that we had somewhere close to 20,000 in sugar; pineapple must have been at least another seven thousand. The longshoremen, prior to mechanization, must have had around, oh, four thousand. Add that together you must have had -

Ward: About 30,000?

LG: Yes, a large group.

Ward: How many members did the International have, all told?

LG: Warehouse had been a big organization, about 13,000 members. Longshore, prior to mechanization on the mainland, must have had somewhere around twenty-five to thirty thousand.

Ward: So, in a very few years, Hawaii had become almost half of your membership.

LG: Yes, but not quite; but having your membership and having it under contract are always two different things. It's like getting somebody to register to vote and how to vote. Every outstanding scholar who has done any work on Hawaii recognizes that some of these basic changes we made are part of the underpinning to a whole democratic change in Hawaii, on land ownership, distribution of wealth, unionization, the role in the political community; it went into every facet of the whole structure in the Islands.

There are a couple of other items on the sugar strike that are worthwhile mentioning. One was an incident involving Jack Hall who had been appointed to the Police Commission, of all things, somewhere around 1945 -

Ward: The Police Commission for Honolulu or all the Islands?

LG: I think it was just Honolulu. During the strike, Judge (Phillip L.) Rice on the island of Kauai issued an injunction on picketing that went back to the unlawful assembly act concept. When we

LG: took the case before a special three-man panel of the federal court, they knocked down the law, pointing out that the statute went back to the time of King George. In other words, an assembly of over three people could be declared by a justice of the peace to be a potential danger to health and safety, or whatever it was, and thus outlaw picketing.

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Ward: We were talking about the unlawful assembly act, the injunction and Jack Hall's position on the Police Commission.

LG: Anyway, Jack Hall let go quite a blast at Rice, calling him a lawless judge. Afterwards Jack said, "You know, that means I resign from the Police Commission; what the hell!" That was almost automatic.

We decided that we would observe the injunction in part; instead of having regular pickets, we'd have a parade every day. The parade included all the workers, the kids, the wives, and the strike leadership would do a head count and make sure that everything was holding up well.

Anyway, the strike finally fell into place, including a settlement. The one place that refused to go back to work was Pioneer Mill. I mentioned that earlier - that's the place, where they remember Big Bill. Pioneer Mill is located on the Island of Maui and the main town there is Lahaina.

The manager was Jack Moier, a Scotsman, a very tough egg in his own way, a very determined guy, knew sugar and was a competent manager, but a hard guy to get along with; although later on he became quite a friend of the union. I got to know him personally and sort of liked him, once you were able to get past some of this hard shell of his.

I want to tell of this small incident that occurred after we finally settled sugar. Pioneer Mill continued on strike for about a month after

LG: the other workers had gone back to work, the reason for it being that some eight or ten of our members had been fired. They were accused of assault and battery on some lunas who were trying to do some irrigation in the fields.

Nate Feinsinger was still in the picture, and he got Clark Kerr, later the head of the University of California, to go down there as the arbitrator. We felt that if Feinsinger was recommending Clark Kerr our chances wouldn't be too bad. We knew better than to try to get the guys back to work until this issue was resolved, because they were an awfully tough and determined bunch and they just weren't going back and not until all strikers went back with them.

Well, I went down to handle the arbitration before Clark Kerr. The thing I discovered pretty quickly is that there was just no way to get these guys to lie - you know, a little bit. You know what I mean on an arbitration case. One of the key members there, an officer of the local, was a Filipino. I said, "Were you in the field?" And he says, "No, no, but there's no question, I whacked that supervisor." I said, "Where did you do it?" "Oh, downtown, next to the movie house."

"And what happened out in the field?" "Well, there they were trying to irrigate and some of the guys went out there and talked to them and said, 'Look, you shouldn't be doing this, you're breaking the strike - it's not your work.'" I said, "Any of these lunas have tools in their hands?" He said, "Yeah, sure, some of them had hoes." "Did they make as though they were going to hit you with them?" He said, "No, I wouldn't say that; maybe they used some hard words."

The issue wasn't what had happened in the field at all. The issue was this background of the relations on the plantation, the attitude of the workers towards the lunas, the whole policy of hiring these guys out of the navy and army as lunas; their attitude towards people like the Filipino farm workers. This was really the issue.

LG: Finally, after digging around a long time with these strikers, I went back to the same one who whacked the supervisor and I said, "But this didn't happen on the plantation?" and he said, "No, it happened at the motion picture house." I said, "What happened? Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I live in the Filipino camp and this luna used to go by all the time, walk by my house, and every time he'd see me - he knew I was active in the union - he'd call me 'monkey dog'".

Apparently this was an insulting expression that these haoles used against Filipinos. He said, "I kept thinking about it and thinking about it and one night I was down there - you know, we don't have too much to do - near the movie house and I see this luna and I step right up and I hit him." I said, "Well, who was around?" He says, "Well, the cop was there. He is the one who arrested me." (laughter)

The thing to do was to get the man to tell his story just the way he told it to me. After he told the story, Kerr realized he wasn't dealing with the simple question of someone deliberately going out and beating up some foreman; he was dealing with something that ran very, very deep. And the men were reinstated. Then, Harriet Bouslog worked out some sort of understanding with the district attorney that our people would do several weekends in jail.

This whole system of paternalism in contract labor had so many crazy off-shoots. For example, it had been quite common long before the union came along that if contract workers happened to go off on a tear, or if they got into a big beef on a Saturday night, the employers did not see this as much punishment, going to jail and sitting on their fanny, having a vacation and eating.

So, they devised a penalty which was quite acceptable, weekends in jail. A guy, in other words, lost his time off. Come Monday morning, daybreak, back on the job. This occurred in the case of Maui. Later on it also occurred in Honolulu, some jail sentences that grew out of the longshore strike; guys did weekends.

LG: An old friend of mine, Simeon Bagasol, was one of the men who was indicted - wonderful old-timer. I remember being down there once when the guys were serving their time. This was in '49. Somebody said, "Maybe you ought to take a ride out there to the jailhouse." I said, "Sure."

So, I go out there and here are a couple of guys with guitars and some women, food and a few drinks. They had a little party, sort of a send-off for the weekend. Then, I'm talking to one of the men about that and ask, "How do you feel about it?" "Oh, not too bad - first time in my life I ever saved money."

I mentioned something about Jack Moier. About six months later I bumped into him and he said, "You know, I'm glad this strike is over and the guys are back to work. Fundamentally, they are a good bunch. I'm having a rough time with the company. They don't have any confidence in me."

He had a plan to clear out a lot of boulders on the slopes behind Lahaina and to roll these rocks down the palis to the small valleys between the hills. He was convinced that what you would have then would be virgin soil, because the rocks held the soil in place. He got some stands of cane that were actually spectacular; 80, 90, 100 tons to the acre.

The company was on his ass. Pioneer Mill was owned by American Factors, but he was in hock for four million bucks, something like that. As a matter of fact, he was one of those who pleaded inability to pay in the 1947 or '48 sugar negotiations.

We had a research team go out to examine their records. Teddy Kreps, who worked for us in the research department was part of that team. Jack and I had the material that Teddy had pulled together and we started asking Moier some questions: "You're convinced that this thing will work, aren't you?"

He said, "Yeah, the agency just said they're going to cut off the money; that's the reason I can't pay." I said, "Will you kindly explain the

LG: difference between your situation and say, a guy who is just opening up a store and he's got an inventory that's worth a million dollars and the product he's got is so successful that he knows damn well that a week after he opens up the store, it will all be sold for two million. Now, the day before he opens the store, he owes a million dollars; he's broke. But a week later, he'll probably double his money. Now, aren't you in the same position?"

He says, "Yeah, but the agency doesn't believe that." We were thinking more like he was than the agency. After the hearing, he took me aside and said, "Look, we haven't been friends, but things are straightening out here, and I want you to do me one favor." I said, "What's that?" He said, "You know, Pioneer Mill (he'd been there for many years) had the best soft ball team on the Islands. Since the strike, the guys won't play for the company any more. Would you please talk to them?" I said, "Sure." This gives you a bit of a picture of plantation community life.

Ward: So, you got the guys to play?

LG: I asked them to, and they probably did, although by that time the ILWU was setting up its own rival leagues all over the place. They had all kinds of company sports.

Oh, one small item on the Sugar strike: During the strike there was a good deal of redbaiting, not to be surprised at. But a lot of stuff in the papers had anti-Semitic overtones.

Ward: On you, personally?

LG: Oh, deliberate use of Goldblatt and Gladstein. It was pretty clear by some of the cartoons they ran that there was a real under-current of anti-Semitism and, of course, I was unhappy and disturbed. Towards the tail end of negotiations, when there was no question in my mind that we had the beef won, I decided that we would deliberately hang tough on a couple of items.

They didn't value out to a great deal of money, but when you're talking about 20,000 - 25,000 workers, a penny an hour costs about a half

LG: million dollars a year. I figured to hang on to at least one of these things. It was only dragging the settlement on a bit longer, and finally they gave in on this item, whatever it was.

About a year later, Jim Blaisdell was asking, "I could never understand why the devil you hung so tough on that one little item there at the end of the negotiations; it wasn't that important to you." I said, "No, offhand it wasn't, but I figured that was about the right price you ought to pay for the anti-Semitic stuff in the papers." He never mentioned it again.

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(Interview 16: 4 July, 1978)##

The Tough Hotelman

Ward: Continuing the Goldblatt interview after a lapse of about a month. Lou, you were going to tell us about Jerry Zukor.

LG: He owned the Niumalu Hotel, where a number of us stayed. The rates were reasonable; they had been frozen by the OPA and the place was on the American plan which included meals. Jerry Zukor came out of Hell's Kitchen in New York. How he landed in Hawaii, I'm not sure. At first he was terribly skeptical; as a matter of fact, I think he distrusted every person in this world, and in the main with good reason. At one time, Jerry Zukor made the crack that he couldn't leave Hawaii because he couldn't think of anybody he hadn't doublecrossed.

Obviously, born on the wrong side of the tracks; had been a very rough character in his day; managed fighters; had a great contempt for them, like he did for most people. He was one of those impossible products of the ghettos. Jerry had made himself a hunk of money, first by having a bar in downtown Honolulu that catered to seamen

LG: and some of the local people. Later on he picked up some additional bars. I think I told you this yarn about him and the 20-minute rule?

Ward: No.

LG: Well, this bar was not too far from some of the whore houses down on Hotel Street. When the navy hit there, the men would line up a block and a half, with these lovely missionary ladies walking past once in a while. Later on, the red light district was closed, primarily because of the pressure from the mothers back home on the navy and the army.

But Jerry boasted that he paid the greatest OPA fine in Hawaii history for short drinks. He imposed a 20-minute rule in his bars, his idea being very simple: quick turn-over. So, a kid of barely drinking age would walk in. I don't know if Jerry even looked for an ID; if the kid was in uniform, that was enough. He could have all he could drink in 20 minutes. You can imagine the result; this kid would try to gulp down eight or ten drinks in 20 minutes and go out on the sidewalk and throw them all up. So Jerry got quick rotation of the bars.

He never believed anything I told him. When I told him what I was making a week, he wouldn't believe me. He said, after I told him it was in the constitution, "Ah, you don't pay any attention to that - nobody else does either." I said, "So, that's it, Jerry, and if you want to know what my expenses are a day and why I always beef about what you're trying to charge me, it's the same thing; right there in the constitution."

But eventually he decided, by golly, I am telling the truth. So, Jerry made his hunk of dough and bought the Niumalu, had this American plan with which he was stuck; he couldn't change it because of OPA regulations. Henry Schmidt stayed there, too. Jerry had a couple of shacks, fairly recent, but some of them were terribly old, just held together by termites.

One time Jerry comes to me and says, "Anything you can do to get rid of Henry Schmidt, I'll pay his hotel somewhere else. Help him get a nice

LG: room somewhere. They're a lot of places downtown that are closer to the union hall; he'll like that." I said, "Why?" "Well," he says, "Henry is a nice guy, he doesn't make any trouble at all; he doesn't even complain about the meals."

I think Jerry had to do some shopping to get some of the cooks he had; they were hopeless; just gas hounds. You were lucky to get a meal at all and some didn't come out as intended, I'm sure. Or maybe they were intended that way!

Jerry was trying to get rid of the American Plan because if somebody moved out who was covered by that plan, he could replace him with a tourist. The same gimmick you have right now by Supervisor Feinstein in San Francisco. She's got a place that had some elderly residents. The rooms are being converted very nicely. Of course the people will eventually be pushed out, or they'll die, and then she can rent those rooms out on a daily basis.

I said to Jerry, "What's Henry got to do with this?" He said, "We've got around four gals here, they're all sort of old maids. I watch Henry" - and I think he watched everything in that place - "he comes home in the evening; he's very prompt. He always comes home before dinner - not like you."

Henry was determined to have that meal - it was all covered in the expenses. And you know, Henry is that way; he's a very meticulous Dutchman, old wooden shoes. Jerry says, "As soon as Henry starts walking down there" - it was a long hotel-motel sort of thing - "these old maids will open up and say, 'Oh, Henry, I just happened to find a bottle of liquor - let's have a drink together!' They'll never leave as long as Henry is around."

Henry had that faculty. I don't know what the hell that character had, but the same thing would happen at parties, as I recall. You see Henry there just stuffing his pipe as stoically as they come, and pretty soon there would be a whole circle of girls just sitting around Henry's feet; not a particularly good raconteur, but he loved to regale them as best he could. So, Jerry wants to get rid of Hank. Henry later decided on his own to move because he wanted to be closer to town.

LG: Jerry was not an early riser, but I got down there for breakfast early one morning and here was Jerry, and I could see he was sitting on the newspaper. I couldn't figure out what the devil Jerry was doing there; this was around 6:30 - 7:00 o'clock in the morning - Jerry starts sort of wandering around, mostly about the strike - he'd been convinced as soon as the strike began that we couldn't win.

I asked him why and he said, "You can't trust Filipinos." I said, "By the way, did you ever have them as fighters?" He said, "Yeah." "Did you ever trust them?" "No." "Did they ever trust you?" "No, of course not." He'd try to cheat them blind - he'd make a deal with the referee for a couple of bucks. "They'll doublecross you," he said. "No," I don't think so. I know that there are 6,000 new Filipinos who just arrived." As a matter of fact, they had arrived just before the strike began.

Ward: Those were the guys who were signed up on the boat coming over?

LG: Yes, and these are the guys who stuck all through the strike. When we interviewed some of them, they said, "Well, we fight the Japanese for five years, we can fight the Big Five for another five." They were a wonderful bunch, a lot of them are now in union leadership.

We discovered later that a lot of them had not been field workers. There are all kinds of stories about their background. A number of them had been educated or self-educated. When the Hawaii Sugar Planters Association went over there to recruit these men, they were careful not to get anybody who was literate; they wanted kids out of the farms, the more depressed, the better.

They'd bring them over as contract labor under the arrangement they had with the Philippines, the HSPA and the government. Some of these kids told me they'd go out and chop wood for a month until their hands were tough and blistered; made sure they wore the oldest possible clothes they could find before they went down to be interviewed.

LG: They always lied about their education because they wanted to go over, partly out of curiousity as youngsters do, partly out of the whole economic scene in the Philippines; partially a general feeling that they would see a new part of the world. They might have picked up a little bit about the union, so there were a number of progressives among them - progressive kids and by and large a very solid group.

As a matter of fact, during the strike, we'd have trouble finding out if they were in need. Some of them never said a word during the strike. People just had to go around and convince them to come down to the soup kitchen; or leave food. When the strike started, most of them had a pair of jeans and a buck in their pockets. The Japanese and others who had lived there a long time were thoroughly prepared. I, for one, felt very confident that the Filipinos would stick, and they did.

Well, here's Jerry Zukor at breakfast with the paper under his ass; finally, he pulls out the paper and says, "Is this true?" There was something about the employers having offered ten million dollars to settle the strike. We had been in the middle of negotiations going very late at night; I was pretty sleepy and not anxious to talk because we were going back again.

Obviously, the strike was on its way to being settled. He says, "Is this thing true?" "I guess so; I don't know; we haven't figured exactly what it costs them, because that is not the way a strike is run. We gave them certain demands; some of them cost money and some of them don't." So, he said, "Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?" I said, "No, that's not the recommendation of the committee." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, for one thing we've gotten word out of Washington . . "

The employers were convinced that I had some personal contacts in the Department of Agriculture because I would drop these bits of information which if by doing a little careful reading of the Congressional Record, or following some of the hearings, anybody could have picked up.

LG: But the information we'd picked up was that the Commodity Credit Corporation was in the process of making an adjustment in certain farm commodities after the war. They had been frozen, and the government thought that certain restitution ought to be made to some groups of farmers, and among them was sugar. It looked as though they would pick up a big hunk of dough, somewhere around maybe about five or six million dollars; a windfall.

Jack and I had gone over the whole thing in great detail and decided let's wait another day or two; no great harm done. Everything was moving along all right. If the employers did pick up another hunk of dough, we knew there would be some more money around for our demands.

It wasn't a matter of us having a contract and sitting on it; we were still in the process of negotiations and we were better off to keep some of these issues alive. Jerry wasn't aware of this. All I told him was that we had information that the employers were going to get another big hunk of money and we ought to get part of it; they owed us for enough years.

Jerry looked at me for a long time, and said, "Jesus, you're a damn fool, aren't you?" I said, "Why?" He says, "Well, you get 10 percent, don't you?" He had it fixed in his head that no trade unionist would be settling for anything less than 10 percent for himself.

Ward: He's not the only one who feels that way, too.

LG: That's right. Later on when the strike was over I ribbed him about the Filipinos. He decided that he was wrong and that he did misunderstand them.

The Niumalu Hotel was still there when I was in Hawaii during the 1949 longshore strike. What year it was, I'm not sure, but he came to me and said, "Look, Lou, I've got to take a trip to the mainland. I've had a big beef with my wife, we're going to break up and she'll get plenty, don't worry about that; but I've got some business things I want to do on the mainland."

LG: So, I said, "Why don't you just go?" "No, I can't leave here. I'll tell you what, Lou, I'll make a deal with you." Remember, now, the war's over. During the war Jerry Zukor was making something called either Five or Six Island gin, bourbon, you name it. It was just plain alcohol with some coloration and dilution added. And everybody down there called it Five Island Death; it was horrible tasting stuff.

I had it by mistake one night and from then on I kept in closer contact with some of our longshore friends where you could get something decent off the boats. Jerry had this thing, among other things, this small distillery - or so he called it - where you mix the stuff in the bathtub.

He says, "I'll tell you what, Lou. I want to make a deal with you. I know what you're getting paid and that's the reason I think you will find it pretty attractive. I'll guarantee you 60,000 bucks a year if you come to work for me. I want you to look after all my interests here in Hawaii. I'm going to give you the distillery - it's yours. If it doesn't bring you in $60,000 bucks a year I'll pay you the difference; just so I'll know I have someone here looking after my things when I go to the mainland. I got enough."

And it's true he had enough. By that time he'd also bought the Dan Topping-Sonja Henie estate in Diamond Head, the one with the big slide into the swimming pool. There was a party there for Terry when she came down sometime during the 1946 sugar strike. I had been down there so damn long, I said, "Come on down." She spent a very fine time down there; she likes the beaches and the swimming pools.

Ward: Oh, this is after Jerry bought the place?

LG: Oh, yes. Jerry had the place when I first stayed there, in 1945, I guess. That's where I stayed as long as he had the joint, even though it wasn't the best place in the world. But I liked it. So, Jerry says, "Here's the deal I'm offering you." I said, "Let me ask you a question first. That distillery of yours can't be doing too well, can it?" "Well, he says, "The war is over and there's

LG: a lot of competition." No mention that his stuff was lousy. I said, "Yeah, it's having trouble and it's not going to pay what you are proposing." "That's no problem, Lou," he says, "no problem at all. You know, if you are in charge of that distillery I'll see that everyone knows about it; all those Filipinos will buy booze from you."

I finally told him, "You know, of all the propositions you could make to me is one where I have to go out and poison our own members." So, we let it go at that. I don't know if he was serious or not. I think he was. It was probably partially true. He married an Oriental girl later. I'm not sure whether they had a child or not. Jerry didn't live too long after that. I think he died of a heart attack.

But he was a character, giving demonstrations on how he could cheat, tickets, every gimmick there was. He came to me one time and said, "Come on, we'll go down to the fights tonight; I got some tickets." So, we go down to the fights - he had four tickets, four together.

The way he handled these things - some sort of system of palming them - he counted out the four tickets and gave them to the guy who tore off the stubs; the guy wound up with only two. Jerry, with two tickets, walks around, looks over the fence, and sees a couple of guys and says, "Here, here are a couple of tickets for the fights." So, Jerry would do these things; pure mischief on his part.

Ward: I'd hate to play poker with him.

LG: Never did. Never did. No, I don't know if he played cards. He made another offer to me at one time which I was sorely tempted to take up. We were in a little beef with Art Rutledge; it might have been before the sugar strike.

Ward: That's the Teamster man -

LG: Yes, the Teamster guy; Rutledge had a running feud with Jack Hall. He envied Jack enormously and did not have any of Jack's talents, although

LG: he was a very shrewd man, had terrific cunning; no two ways about that. He knew the gathering and application of power. He had the highest turnover of any man who ever ran a union. They would last long enough to get a base, but eventually these things caught up with him.

He had teamster charters, hotel charters, a building trades charter - I think it was either roofing or cement mixers - a charter which he put into the Teamsters for the transit drivers. I understand that in the hotel elections a month or so ago he and his son lost out pretty badly, although I think he is still in charge of the Teamsters local. He still has a job as a trustee for their Hotel International.

By that time I guess Jerry was beginning to trust me, and he offered to give me a hand in this beef we were having with Rutledge. He offered to go on our radio program and tell a bit of scandal about Rutledge. It may have been true, but I had to turn it down.

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Ward: All right, you just finished a story on Jerry Zukor.

LG: As a matter of fact, there were numerous efforts on our part to get along with Rutledge. The guy had some talent in terms of his ability to keep a lot of balls in the air at the same time.

Ward: Okay, now you were mentioning something else.

LG: I want to go back and pick up a lot of loose ends on that Fair Labor Standards Act suit; they tie in directly to the Fair Labor Standards Act settlement; also a certain amount of money coming back to the union because of the feeling on the part of some of us that the fee was too great, and also some of the things that occurred in the negotiations themselves. Well, the monies we got there were very helpful in the '46 strike.

Ward: Yes; wasn't there something about brown rice?

That Awful Brown Rice

LG: Most of the workers on the Islands eat rice, so I wrote Virginia Woods in San Francisco to ship us 10,000 sacks of rice, soonest possible. She did a quick dietary study and determined that brown rice was more nutritious than polished rice. So, we got 10,000 sacks of brown rice.

Ward: Virginia is like that - very scientific.

LG: But our members and their families thought very poorly of the deal. Brown rice was for pigs, not men and women and children. There was plenty of growling about that, but under the circumstances they finally ate the brown rice. I'm sure no one was hurt by it and the metabolism didn't change that much.

Ward: Nobody got beri-beri?

LG: No. If the dietary studies I got from Virginia Woods were accurate our strikers were being strengthened every day. Some of that money was loaned out for buying supplies, staples in the main. I mean, the guys never bought any fresh stuff during the strike.

I'd say that many of the strikers were having a more balanced diet during the strike. I think this was particularly true among the Filipinos, partially because they had to cook for themselves; a lot of single men; partially because of old time habits of working on farms, where the idea of coming in for lunch didn't exist, so you'd take a lunch with you.

The combination of circumstances resulted in a very common diet, a lunch box that was just filled with a pound and a half of rice and a couple of strips of dried fish. Well, obviously, this kind of a diet is not the best in the world, but during the strike, by and large, they ate all right.

Of course, the strike was a very binding thing; bringing people together and eating under the same roof in the soup kitchen makes a big difference,

LG: particularly on morale. So, the units would still have to borrow money for things like staples, you see.

I remember going over to Olaa on the Big Island. Strike headquarters had a warehouse attached, and here were a whole crew of our guys taking one sack of rice after another and putting it through a screen because they had found some bugs in it.

Those were the things available, time and work; an enormous amount of energy. But anyway, they still needed staples, and that's what some of the money went for. Once in a while someone would need a couple of bucks for gasoline, if he had a car.

That money was all paid back - no problem there. The money was then used later on to purchase the land in Waikiki where the union headquarters are located on 451 Atkinson Drive. That's where we had those murals by Pablo O'Higgins (famous Mexican artist). Incidentally, I got him to do the murals. Pablo had been a friend of mine for a number of years.

Jack sent over the original plans and I sat down with a guy in San Francisco, Louis Cohen, a contractor who had built either the War Memorial or the Opera House, I'm not sure which, and he took a terrible bath because after he bid on the thing he ran into all kinds of very peculiar subsoil so that the foundation, instead of being rock, was nothing but sand. There were stories about him that he'd paid back every damn nickel.

He came along with a whole series of intelligent revisions; a lot of money was saved. Jack got to be very fond of him. After the building was built I talked to Jack about a mural down there and mentioned Pablo. I wrote to Pablo and convinced him he ought to go there. He went, and spent about six months doing that mural. It's a very fine piece of work.

The man who worked with him and was very helpful in getting the thing jelled was Dave Thompson, our educational director down there.

Ward: Dave Thompson, yes, I know him -

LG: Yes, he's the man who served in the Marines, lost a leg at Iwo Jima. Dave is still working for us. He came over towards the end of the war, wanted to work for the ILWU, liked Hawaii and was sort of set on it; he was hospitalized there. He went to the California Labor School in San Francisco and then we had him go back there, working with us.

Wonderful guy, did a fantastic job of getting used to a prosthetic device for his leg. Walks so that it is almost imperceptible - jogs, believe it or not. When you go swimming with him at Waikiki or Gray's Beach, absolutely no hesitation about his leg. He hobbles down to the beach with the leg on, takes it off and goes swimming.

He was a very good swimmer, and he used to like the business of going out so damn far that people would get all excited and start running for the Coast Guard; after a while, the Coast Guard knew all about him. It was not uncommon for him to go out and swim for an hour or more. I've seen him do that in Hilo, off the rocks.

Dave was a pretty good artist himself. Dave, by the way, was a friend - I don't know whether you know Dick Liebes or George Gutekuntz -

Ward: Dick Liebes I know and George Gutekuntz, yes, he was a cook.

LG: Member of the Marine Cooks and Stewards -

Ward: A professional cook, too, wasn't he?

LG: Yes, I -

Ward: Didn't he go into partnership with . . . ?

LG: At the Ondine (a Sausalito restaurant) - yes, they all went to school together, or they knew each other. Dave worked with Pablo and they put together these murals. They are one of the finest things they have in Hawaii. People drop

LG: around to see, they just hear about the thing, you know; not members of the union, just curious to see them.

Ward: I wanted to ask you a question. Now, you had these racial divisions in Hawaii which had been fostered sedulously by the Big Five, and the job was to erase these divisions as much as possible and unify the men. There are a lot of Portuguese in the East Bay and there was a theory among some of our people that it was very difficult to make union men out of them. Do you find anything like that in Hawaii, in the Portuguese group there?

LG: I know the theory. The theory is that fundamentally they want to become small businessmen, particularly farmers. I don't think it was because of national background; I think it was because of their economic situation. Portuguese had been among the first group of migrants brought over there, about the same time as the grape crop failed in Madeira -

Ward: Which had been when? A couple of hundred years ago?

LG: No, no. Hawaii didn't have any sugar industry a couple of hundred years ago. I think the first sugar industry was 1785 or thereabouts. But they were brought over here in the 1800s, before you had large migrations of Japanese. I think it might have been a little later than the Chinese. The Chinese got off the plantations in many cases very rapidly; where they continued on the plantations they were a very tight knit community.

One of the worst plantations I ever saw was on Waianae, terribly lousy land and very inaccessible. The Chinese were there and some of the Chinese camps were unbelievably bad. Impossible housing. We ran some photographs of that housing during the 1946 sugar strike.

A lot of the Portuguese were skilled men. A lot of them were truck drivers. They made good union men, although no question about it, some of them had become pretty rough lunas because - bear in mind again this all goes back to the whole haole business.

LG: Some Portuguese were lunas long before the Japanese, long before the union; finally there was a Portuguese sugar manager. I think his name was Gomez, somewhere on the Hamakua Coast. Every time you ran across a Portuguese, he would talk of this manager. On the other hand, you had some awfully good, tough union men among them. Remember, Chili Duarte was Portuguese -

Ward: I know; he was considered by some people in the east bay to be an exception to the rule.

LG: No; we had a lot of Portuguese members. As a matter of fact, we used to talk about the Portuguese Mafia. There was a whole group of Portuguese came out of the west side of Oakland. That's where Chili grew up; a tough bunch of kids, let me tell you. A number of them worked around the waterfront; so did Chili, so did his relatives.

Anyway - back to this business of the building. We bought this land at 451, we didn't know whose name to put it in because we had no building association at the time, so Jack suggested why not put it in my name until the building association is set up. And I said, "No problem there."

But the employers were determined to use every little thing that came along; somebody sent a clipping that this real estate sale had taken place to Mr. Louis Goldblatt of 451 Atkinson Drive, a valuable piece of Waikiki property. When they posted the deeds, believe it or not, the damn thing showed up on some of the docks in San Francisco. Some of the characters we had around there posted these things on the dock. So, we bought the land.

The building was financed by 25 cents a member per month over a period of around four or five years, easily financed. Luckily, by the time the building was built we had a lot of power in the Legislature. It was declared an eleemosynary institution on damn good ground that it did at least as much good for the people as the church.

As a matter of fact, it was highly debatable as to how much good the church did, particularly looking at its background in Hawaii. The only

LG: thing is that at one time ours was a substantially sized building there along Atkinson Drive; now it looks like a little tiny structure planted among all the highrises.

Ward: Was that argument that the union did as much good as the church actually raised in the discussion?

LG: Oh, I think that rather than make the thing a big, controversial issue, it was easily adopted. There were a lot of eleemosynary institutions down there, tax exempt.

Ward: I see, so it wasn't all that - - -

LG: No, no. I think the fraternal organizations were, or at least some of them were. Let's get into fraternal organizations. The redbaiting was pretty intense down there, with the onset of the Cold War. It got even worse during the Smith Act indictments down there and reached a screaming pitch during the 1949 Longshore strike.

One of the outfits that became a self-appointed mentor of Americanism was the Elks Club. One of the reasons was that the guy who headed up the Honolulu Labor Council was also an Elk. On one occasion when I wanted to talk to him about something, he said, "Why don't you come out to the Elks Club? We can have a drink out there." I went out there; a lovely club near Diamond Head. The drinks were cheap - a sort of a club bar arrangement.

They launched full page ads on the "Spearhead for Americanism" sometime during the Cold War and about the time of our expulsion from the CIO. There was a vitriolic redbaiting campaign; they wrapped themselves in the American flag. They just didn't wrap themselves in the American flag, they cut themselves out a pair of pants, a coat, a vest, the whole she-bang.

One ad after the other on this "Spearhead for Americanism," attacking the union. I remember one time we really fixed their wagon; I mean we fixed it good.

LG: The Elks Club was pure white, except where you had the Black Elks. You might recall, years ago they set up orders of Black Elks. At the time I was curious about it and then found out that the reason for it was that the whites were pure white organizations.

I confirmed that in the late 30s or early 40s on trips to San Pedro. A couple of our members belonged to the Elks Club, and I raised the question, "Isn't it true that the Elks are pure white?" "Yes, but we're going to change." I think it was in their constitution as "white, American citizens."

Anyway here they were running these ads on "Spearhead for Americanism," so I talked to Jack and I said, "I'm pretty convinced that if we do some digging around, we're going to find some people who've been denied membership in the Elks." So, we start doing some digging around, and sure enough, we come across a couple of Japanese war vets who had been denied membership in the Elks.

Then, we come across a Portuguese guy who obviously is white and had been denied membership in the Elks. So, we ran a counter-ad to the "Spearhead for Americanism". It is the only ad we ever ran, talking about their brand of Americanism and these Japanese; we had affidavits from them and this Portuguese; he not only gave us an affidavit, he wanted it in the paper; and we put it in there. We said, "Now if this is what they call Americanism, they can have it." Never another word out of them.

X FINANCIAL LEGERDEMAIN

Staving Off A Million-Dollar Judgment

LG: Later on in 1947, there was one of the first suits filed against this union under Taft-Hartley, a damage suit by Juneau Spruce in Alaska. The Longshoremen had struck this particular lumber company's docks. It was a strike around maintaining our jurisdiction of longshore work.

The company was shut down for some time. The Woodworkers respected the picket line. Later on, the company managed to get to some of the Woodworkers, or the strike had just run its course; they got the Woodworkers to agree to do the longshore work.

Juneau Spruce then filed a suit against our union because the strike had not been called off - as ordered by a court - on the grounds that it was a jurisdictional beef, inasmuch as they had a contract with the woodworkers to do the work. They won a judgment against us in the federal court. That judgment went all the way up to the U. S. Supreme Court, which ruled against us and upheld the judgment of one million dollars against our union.

While the Juneau Spruce thing was winding its way through the courts, and particularly after they had gotten the Supreme Court decision, we had a running battle on the question of do we or don't we pay. For a long time we were just operating out of our hat. When they tried to attach a bank account we had, all they picked up was an overdraft.

LG: We sold the building at 150 Golden Gate which we had bought because we had the votes in the building association. After we were expelled from the CIO, - and at that time we were down at 604 Montgomery Street - I figured the least we ought to do was get our building back. We were housing all kinds of unions and some of them very friendly, but sure enough sooner or later the CIO would take over the building and that was really the only important asset the CIO had around here.

So, we simply talked to Dick Lynden (of Local 6) and others and they walked in there, cast their votes and said, "We're selling the building to the ILWU." And we bought it. A few people were a little bit disturbed because they were having cheap rent and they liked the building. I don't blame them. On the other hand, we needed the headquarters and I for one was determined that the CIO was not going to get that from us.

So they tried to attach the building, but by that time we had the building sold to Local 142 in Hawaii. We took all the money and spent it. We paid people six months in advance on their salaries. I'll admit I made damn few friends that way because they'd go out with this big hunk of money, buy a lot of things and a couple of months later they were broke; but nothing else we could do.

We paid the printer six months in advance - worked out all kinds of things. If I needed cash, I would make some arrangements where the cash would come in, generally just by hand.

I recall for example, George Andersen took a trip to Honolulu. I said, "We're running short of dough, why don't you bring back around $60,000 bucks," which he did. But he came in over a weekend and by that time we were living here, (Mill Valley), so it must have been around 1955-56, I guess, and he had $60,000 and said, "Here it is."

I said, "What the devil do I want it for? I can't go down to the bank and put it in the safety deposit box." He said, "Well, you asked me to

LG: bring it and I'm not going to keep it." So, the money hung around all weekend and I figured the best thing to do was to put it in the most prominent place of all, so I just left the thing in a cigar box on the mantelpiece.

Then, I made an arrangement with a guy at the bank; he was pretty friendly. I'd give him a list of bills I wanted paid - salaries, or other expenses; everything we could prepay, and give him the exact amounts.

He would make out cashier's checks. He'd call me just as the bank was closing and I'd go there and knock; he'd open up because he was expecting me and I'd give him the cash, pick up the cashier's checks and have them all mailed within a half hour.

So, that was the only way we could operate to make sure Juneau Spruce couldn't collect. It was a cat-and-mouse game. This went on and on. They finally went before Federal Judge (Paul) Goodman; they wanted a receivership. So, he wouldn't do it. He said, "Well, after all, creditors chasing debtors is one of the oldest American customs we have."

So, he appointed a monitor from the court. We wouldn't pay for the transcript. The monitor had to pay for it, or the people who were chasing us.

Those hearings went on; we discovered that the monitor was not all that unfriendly, he didn't want to work too hard. A couple of hours in the morning were enough for him. I guess he was paid by the day. He was in no great hurry just sitting around the table trying to chase our assets.

I recall one long session that went on for about two weeks, not just counsel from Portland who was representing Juneau Spruce, but also local counsel, including one of the guys who used to be on the California Wonder Team, the guy they called Fat something. I'm trying to remember his name; he wasn't fat at all, as a matter of fact he was quite thin.

LG: I bumped into him in Hawaii after the thing was settled. He was trying to tell me how the Portland attorneys for Juneau Spruce were trying to beat him out of his fee. But he finally collected. He didn't give a good goddam about the case. He just wanted his money.

So for about two weeks they were pursuing the building. One thing George Andersen told me, "You don't answer one thing they don't actually insist upon - you do not volunteer one single piece of information." So, I could tell very quickly that they were on a completely wrong track about the building, either they didn't know about the sale or that we had spent all the money.

There was nothing around to attach. They must have gone on for two weeks on this damn thing, going through the records, plowing through to find out if anybody pays rent. Does the building association have any money? No, it's broke too. So, we'd go round and round on this damn thing, and after two weeks they realized they were pursuing a completely wrong line.

One of their attorneys, - the money for their attorneys' fees must have been running up like all hell - finally flips his lid and says, "You could have given us this information two weeks ago." And the referee, who by that time had caught on as to what was happening said, "You didn't ask for it." That was it.

It just went on because there was work to be done. We had all kinds of headaches, troubles. We were independent by then; negotiations, strikes, you name it. But the referee was pretty good; he would set the hearings for the morning. I realized after a couple of hours that there would be no problem. I'd say, "Look, I have a luncheon meeting or an afternoon meeting." So, we'd go on to the next day - that's all. So, it was a half day on Juneau Spruce and half a day on other stuff.

Ward: This was all going on in San Francisco?

LG: Yes. In the course of this whole suit I had occasion to talk to one of the Dant brothers. The Dant brothers owned one of the shipping companies, States Steamship Company. And they were also the big Dant and Russell Lumber interests, which also owned Juneau Spruce. I chased this problem down and said, it's worthwhile talking to him.

Tom Dant was very friendly about the whole thing. He said, "I know what the heck's going on; the only people who have gotten anything out of Juneau Spruce are the lawyers. But it's one of these things that's on the books. They won a big judgment - I don't know if they'll ever collect it."

I tried to be as friendly as I could. I said, "You're better off to try to get along with the union - you own the States Steamship Company - than continue on this thing." "Well," he said, "I'd like to see the thing settled. I'll tell the attorneys to try to settle it with you. I don't think it's worth a hell of a lot. But of course you know that's the way it is - the stockholders." The usual horseshit, because they did have a million dollar judgment.

He must have talked to some of the attorneys because I talked to one of them; (James P.) Rogers was his name. He talked about Juneau Spruce, and I'm not sure if it was Tom Dant or his brother, a big, heavy-set guy. He said that Dant had talked to him that we might be willing to settle.

I said, "Sure, we'd like to settle, but we don't have any money - I'm just telling you that." He said, "Well, then, how can you settle?" I said, "Well, maybe we can dig up a couple of bucks. If you want to come down and talk about it, fine."

So he came down to San Francisco, and we spent a long day; it started around two in the afternoon and wound up at two in the morning. We finished up in the Starlight Room up in the Sir Francis Drake Hotel. It must have been around midnight; we'd had dinner and everything else.

LG: I kept repeating that we didn't have any dough around and this chasing of money could go on forever. There wasn't any money around.

They'd made one move which we had counteracted in 1955; we figured they would try to attach monies coming in to the International as per capita. In other words, to put their claim between the locals and the International. So, we amended the constitution in 1955 - and the amendment still exists in the constitution; per capita is a voluntary obligation in the ILWU, it is not compulsory. You cannot file a suit or attach the assets of a local because they fail to pay per capita.

That, we figured, was the last loophole they might try to use and sure enough they did proceed along that line, but decided they could not get anywhere. I said, "Okay, you're not going to be able to get the money from the locals - no way." He said, "Look, you're burying per capita." I said, "It's a voluntary obligation.

Like the per capita in Hawaii, for example, was buried, except for the cash we needed, as we needed it; did it with other locals. But when the longshoremen of San Francisco wanted to build a building, we used the per capita in Hawaii to buy the longshore property where the longshore building is, down at Fishermen's Wharf. Another time when rumors floated around that Lou Goldblatt got something out of that - the usual horseshit - there's nothing you can do about that, can you?

Anyway, towards one or two o'clock in the morning, I finally said, "Look, there is a piece of money I can get my hands on - you can't - it's owned by the Longshore Legal Defense Fund." That was something that was set up during the time of the Bridges-Robertson-Schmidt defense case. There was some money left over there.

It either went back to the locals, or they voted to turn it over to the International after Juneau Spruce. I said, "It amounts to $68,000; you make a deal and you got $68,000; I'll borrow it from them." And he made the deal. I said,

LG: "Well, better be down at the attorneys tomorrow morning and we'll finalize it." So, we went down to Richie Gladstein's office, and Rogers is down there about 10 o'clock in the morning and I get hold of Richie and tell him to get the papers all ready; we want to get the release signed and we will give him the $68,000 bucks. He thought it was a hell of a good deal.

It was one of those agreements where you come home at night and you know there is something wrong with it; this is too good. And I was right - it was too good. Because just as Rogers gets there - he was pretty badly hung over - he said: "I'd better call my headquarters before I close this thing." And he does.

Well, the guy at the other end, representing a big firm, didn't need the telephone; you could hear him. I don't know what he called this guy, but if he left anything out it was by mistake. And he killed it right then and there. This guy turns and his face was red; terribly embarrassed. "I know I made a deal, but it can't hold up, that's all." He left, very apologetic. So, I figured here we are back again, the old business of cops and robbers, chasing debtors.

Now, I'm going back to the Fair Labor Standards Act suit which might seem to be absolutely non-contiguous. After we settled the Fair Labor Standards Act suit - I told you about the deal we made - it ran about a million and eight hundred thousand bucks, thereabouts.

The thing was all settled and disposed of as far as we were concerned, but the employers had insisted that the union could take up any case the employers demanded be taken up until they had an adjudication of final resort. There's a reason for this. The employers did not want to get bitten again under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

There were still these borderline cases, later on ruled to be non-agricultural and covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act, including the minimum wage provision and the 40-hour week provision and so forth. There could be later

LG: litigation on the question of what they owed the second time. In other words, settling that particular suit did not stop the violation. I guess it was perfectly reasonable from their lights, and of course, we saw nothing wrong with the thing because we were finished. It was the employers who decided each step of the way; the Federal court, the Appelate court, the Supreme court. The employers paid the lawyers. We were absolutely finished with the thing; the record as far as we were concerned was clean.

That was the background of the Fair Labor Standards Act until the Juneau Spruce thing and the Fair Labor Standards Act suit came to the same point. And here is how it happened. After the Juneau Spruce negotiations fell apart, one day I got a call from Jack Hall. This whole thing was thought out, just as the original Fair Labor Standards Act suit was thought out, by Jack Hall; entirely out of his own think tank.

Jack called and said, "Do you recall that Fair Labor Standards Act suit that we still have in litigation?" And I said, "No." He said, "You must remember that we did agree that the employers could keep insisting that the thing be appealed until they get a final decision." I said, "Yes, I recall that, but we are not mixed up in it." "I didn't say we are mixed up in the thing; that's not the point. The thing is now before the Supreme Court, which is due to rule very shortly.

"The employers have come to us with an offer. They said, 'We'd like to make a proposal to you for $250,000 bucks in full settlement of the Supreme Court ruling, whichever way it goes. If the Supreme Court rules right down the line with the union then it's in full settlement. If they rule against you, it's in full settlement. We know it's a gamble for you and it's a gamble for us. If you're prepared to do it, we'd consider making an offer'".

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Ward: You were right in the middle of telling me about this $250,000 offer.

LG: Right. So, I said, "Jack, we've already agreed that as far as we were concerned we had no further interest in the Fair Labor Standards Act." And he said, "That's right and I agree with you completely, Lou. Trying to undertake the distribution of $250,000 to whatever number of guys we had in sugar at the time, 18,000 or 20,000 members, would be a hopeless job. Some people would get 10 bucks, some people would get nothing, and it would be more divisive than it's worth.

"But that's not what I'm thinking of, Lou. We could get around $250,000 bucks. If that will settle Juneau Spruce, I know we'll have no problem getting releases; if there is anybody covered, we can get a release." I said, "First, double check it," and he did. The attorneys got in the act and finally the employers had a completely rounded proposal which as I recall was $250,000 bucks plus the attorneys fees, which were a separate item entirely.

Once we had that nailed down, I confirmed it with Jack. I said, "Okay, I'll call Juneau Spruce and give them 48 hours to either take it or leave it." On that score I realized we had one advantage going for us. Obviously this blow-up on the $68,000 settlement must have had some backwash with the attorneys and also with Dant.

Now Dant might have thought the guy was a damn fool for making a deal like that; on the other hand you have to realize that you can push something like that just so far and then you'll break it. I figured a quarter of a million dollars would look pretty good. So, I got in touch with this guy again, who was really quite surprised.

Ward: The same man with whom you had negotiated the $68,000?

LG: Rogers, yes. I called Dant direct; by that time I was on fairly good talking terms too, with Dant. I said, "This is one final offer; there will be no further offers. It's $250,000 bucks, no questions asked as to where the money comes from - you're going to get it. That's a complete settlement of the suit and get rid of Juneau Spruce once and for all. No further litigation and no bullshit - and it's only 48 hours. Just say 'Yes' or 'No'; there will be no further talks - no negotiations."

Sure enough, I get a call back in less than 48 hours - "You have a deal." We made sure everything was executed this time - no problem. We call the sugar employers - HSPA - and take the $250,000 settlement. The HSPA money is used to pay Juneau Spruce and it doesn't cost the union a goddam nickel!

Well, the sequel to that is really hilarious; somehow or other the newspapers got wind of this thing in Hawaii and they carried the story including the fact that this money had been used to pay off Juneau Spruce. Now, what they should have done, obviously, was to leave the damn thing alone - the employers I'm talking about.

Two things happened then: one, the Supreme Court ruled about a week later against the union on every single item in the Fair Labor Standards Act; we didn't win a thing. In other words, the potential gain for the union was absolute zero. That doesn't make it sound like very good judgment on the part of their attorneys down there.

Secondly, instead of leaving the damn thing alone, the employers issued a long statement to the effect that even though the Supreme Court had ruled in their favor and against the union, the lawyers' judgment was that the potential liability of the employers could have been in excess of $10,000,000. Therefore it was very prudent on their part to settle a potential liability of $10,000,000 dollars for only a quarter of a million dollars.

LG: Well, obviously, you leave something like that alone - you say nothing. It's like losing a poker hand. There's no use going around and weeping about it because somebody will finally say, "Look, you were just a plain goddam fool for drawing to that middle straight."

Everybody in the Islands had a big laugh that the Big Five had been taken for a ride; settled for $250,000 bucks when it wouldn't have cost them a goddam dime. Anyway, that's the windup chapter on the Fair Labor Standards Act suit and Juneau Spruce and the whole she-bang put together.

Ward: It's a great story -

LG: It's a great story - one of the most brilliant things Jack Hall has ever done.

Ward: That was a lulu, it really was.

(Interview 17: 13 July, 1978)

Waving Farewell To The Party

Ward: Lou, during the war years or thereafter, your relations with the Communist party apparently dwindled to nothing except a friendly association once in a while. Is that it?

LG: That's pretty much true, even for a short period before the war and definitely during the war. My relations with many of the people there were very cordial and we sat and chewed the fat once in a while. They had some good ideas, and remember, there were a lot of wonderful people in the trade union movement who had been or were members of the Communist party.

A very dedicated group; the same people who had joined with many of us in the boycott of Japanese goods and the scrap iron beef and doing all we could about raising the devil on Mussolini's invasion of Africa and Ethopia. And, obviously,

LG: they were very active with us in trying to push along the war effort, including a recognition of the job the Soviet Union was doing; also part of the whole movement of opening up a second front.

These were excellent people, although when it came to specific trade union problems, there's no question in my mind that while their intentions might have been good, in many respects they did not have as accurate or as careful an appraisal of the membership as its leaders did.

It was really quite early during that period that I came to the conclusion that having a good program was terribly important; to know where you were going, and that unions are more than just looking forward to the next picket line for an extra nickel an hour. Fundamentally the union movement had to be an instrument for change.

Ward: Would you say, then, that from your point of view and the party point of view, by 1945 or '46 you were no longer a member?

LG: Oh, I think so.

Ward: Did the Duclos letter (a stinging critique of the American Communist party, issued in late 1945 by Jacques Duclos, leading theorist of the French Communist party) have anything to do with your position?

LG: Not a great deal. I reached the conclusion that some of the struggles within the union around issues like Spain weren't that readily digestible by some of our members, even though we had some awfully good guys who went to Spain.

But there was another test I began to use, which I thought was more important and required a good deal more independent judgment. I saw nothing wrong in taking a position on issues, including fighting for the right within the union to take that position, if I believed in it.

But the measure that the membership was going to use was not whether I took a certain position. It was how I applied it in the case of where the

LG: union was going. If I or anybody who believes in the Left takes a position which is tantamount to saying "agreement with my thinking is a price of my leadership," I don't care who that person is, there's a point where that person is dead in the union.

That is not the way the union member sees it. He might decide, okay, you're doing a good job; we trust you, you are not a fat cat, you're not on the make, you're not dealing with employers under the table. On all these things we think you are a good person and doing a good job. But it's another thing to say to that same member, if you want me to stick around here you better agree with everything I say. That they will not accept.

I think John L. Lewis made a terrible mistake when he put on that price for continuation as head of the CIO, the endorsement and campaign for Willkie. Sure, the non-acceptance of the Willkie vote was a vote of no confidence in him.

I remember a lot of us pleaded with Lewis; there I think he was in error. He felt that FDR was dragging us into the war. As I told you earlier, Lewis had a pretty much isolationist bent. He sure as hell agreed with George Washington on no foreign entanglements; he wouldn't trust the British as far as he could get them out of his sight. Typical Welshman in that respect.

Ward: The point is that a personal resignation or expulsion or any action at all regarding the party - you just didn't go to meetings, quit paying dues and that sort of thing?

LG: Pretty much, although some of the party guys could be pretty abrasive. I don't have to tell you the dialogue of politics, or the polemics, or the acerbic vocabulary. The only people who have it topped are the Chinese, because I understand they have two hundred cuss words for everyone of ours; with this endless vocabulary I guess they can go on a lot longer.

LG: But with some of the party people the position they followed was so doctrinaire you couldn't get anywhere; it didn't make any sense. I recall one issue that arose right after the war. The party was on a campaign of super-seniority for blacks. Bear in mind, at that time even the initial fight of getting job openings for blacks was barely getting under way.

A couple of unions had done a fairly decent job - the ILWU had in the main. A number of blacks were taken into the union, in World War II particularly. As longshoremen a lot of them had come up from the South, escaping from the southern ports.

So, we had a high percentage of new members, among them many blacks. Warehouse had blacks almost from the day one. This was part of the credo of the Young Turks and rebels who were part of the inland march; Gene Paton, Chili Duarte, Dick Lynden, Ralph Dawson, Frank Thompson; over in the East Bay, Paul Heide, Ray Heide, his brother, who died of a sudden heart attack. Every one of these guys was under thirty; it was strictly a movement of young rebels.

Oh, there was an attempt to try to get a little more balance and maybe a little more confidence, like old C. T. Quirey who considered his job as secretary as picking up the day's dues, banking them the next morning, and going back to his desk. Papers, shuffling papers. He would never get mixed up in a fight - never get mixed up in negotiations.

Everybody talked about honest, C. T. Quirey and Warren Denton, president of the local for a while. He wasn't a bad egg, actually a pretty nice guy; liked his beer a little bit too much, but he was all right.

I recall a conversation with him during one of our strikes. He said, "Lou, you know, I got to be frank with you. These strikes scare the hell out of me. This whole business, for example, of risking a guy's job." Even though he agreed entirely with what we were trying to do. I recall a crazy incident; you remember Ward Walkup, the guy who ran the Ward Walkup Company?

Ward: I remember the name of the company; I knew there was a Ward Walkup, but that is all.

LG: "Runup - walk down" - they used to call him; those drivers had a workout. I'll never forget being around the docks one day - I was still working on the front, on and off, with the car gangs and a truck came in where Walkup had to either hire a lumper or have somebody help him. It was this thing where normally two guys, the truck driver and his helper would move coffee sacks to the tailgate of the conveyor, one at a time. But Walkup had a big Irish kid. He must have weighed at least 240 pounds and no fat on him, and he was at the end of the conveyor loading these coffee sacks waist high, which does make it a little easier; but those damn sacks weighed from 160 to 200 pounds, and he was handling them single handed.

Walkup was out to demonstrate it could be done. The sweat was running off of the kid like water. I don't know how long that damn thing lasted but even the toughest of teamsters at some point would have to say, "The hell with it, this is just too damn much."

They come in these big jute bags and the bag itself is as loose as a goose. You can grab two ears of a sack and the other guy grabs the other two ears. You can lift that thing waist high and all the coffee is still sitting there on the floor because it's the way the sack is made. It takes a guy with an awful lot of Norwegian steam - elbow grease - to pick it up.

Ward: And do that all day?

LG: Yes, handling coffee was one of the most difficult jobs around, but that was Walkup. Walkup was a big, blustery kind of guy, hard-drinking and hard-boiled. We're sitting around the office fairly late, around Christmas or New Years. Even strikes get quiet around then; but I don't think it's peace on earth and goodwill to men; it's a sort of time off.

LG: And a call comes in and I happen to take it and it's Ward Walkup and he says, "I'd like to talk to somebody down there. Is anyone around?" And I said, "Sure, I'm answering the phone and Warren Denton is here, the president." "Well, can you come over to the office - gotta settle this strike."

At that time they were in that huge Terminal Building at China Basin, right across from the old cold storage dock. These were all warehouses, practically one solid warehouse, and we had the thing organized. So, Warren Denton and I went over there. It was all dark, almost everybody has called it a day; no pickets around, nobody.

We knew where his office was so we went down to that end of the building and there was a light on, probably his office, and we walked upstairs. We went in and there was Ward Walkup. I had met him before and I think Denton had, because he was sort of an ebullient guy. He liked to bullshit with the characters, but at the same time he would throw his weight around. He didn't mind leaning on people.

He was there sitting in the office all by himself. And we sat down and realized he'd been drinking heavily. And he started right off, no formalities or "happy holidays" or anything like that. He says, "This strike is going to be settled tonight." "Fine," we say, "You know what the demands are." "Well, I'm not interested in all that crap; I said we're going to settle it."

"I don't know how we're going to settle this thing unless we sit down and talk about these demands." "We can settle it," he says, "because you guys can settle it; I'm convinced you guys can settle it." "Well, there's a committee and . ." We didn't want to offend him; obviously he was in no shape to do a lot of talking, but he still goes on in this rambling fashion.

Finally, he reaches in the desk and pulls out a .45 and slaps it on the desk and says, "I said it is going to be settled tonight." At which point Warren Denton excuses himself and says,

LG: "I've got to go to the bathroom." Warren Denton leaves. Ward Walkup turns around and says to him, "Must have been a bad piece of ice." And that was all there was to it; nothing else happened. (laughter)

Ward: Nothing happened? Nothing was settled?

LG: No, how could it be? For one thing, he just represented himself. He didn't represent the employer group; he was not one of the spokesmen. Walkup was not the dominant guy in the industry.

Ward: Now you're getting off . . . .

LG: I think it was the following year that Denton decided he wouldn't run for office and he got a job in a brewery. Which is not the worst place in the world because there you could drink all the beer you wanted.

Ward: Most of the guys drank ale.

LG: I don't know - maybe he drank ale. I think it was Gene Paton got elected at that time. Anyhow, they were all young guys.

Ward: All right, so anyway without any formal action of any kind, no resignation, you just ceased to be a party member.

LG: Yeah, practically. I don't think the party was too concerned by any of these things. In the war period the basic approach was just the broad, united front. I knew that because I was state secretary of the CIO from 1938 until 1942. I knew the only possible way of holding the CIO together in the state was to work with some pretty divergent people.

I also discovered that those of us on the left have certain duties to perform. Among them is to learn the technique of doing 99 percent of the work and taking one percent of the credit. And this applied to anyone who wanted to work. If you weren't prepared to do that, then egos finally reached the point where there would be a break.

LG: So, I was working with all kinds of guys like Dalrymple and Richard Francis of the Mine Workers, although he was in the northwest most of the time where they had some coal mines; the Coulter brothers from Oil; they weren't the most militant labor men you'd ever find.

Ward: Rubber?

LG: Yes - Sen-Sen Roberts! He was taking sen-sen all the time, it was the popular thing for improving your breath. He always smelled as though he had just come out of a whorehouse or a barber shop. I remember when (Jack) Knight moved into the Oil Workers, the first thing he did when he came to the coast was to get in touch with me. We worked very closely with the Oil Workers around that time.

As a matter of fact, the policy of working with different people came into very good stead in the North American strike. The guy who really helped when he finally came to the coast was Wyndham Mortimer - there was a great man - really good guy. He had led the sitdown at Flint (Michigan).

So, the whole business of holding the thing together meant that the policy did the job, and something else, too. It meant that all the left-wingers in the CIO were protected. They were perfectly willing to work. The only time they would get dumped was frankly when it was politically convenient for some of the guys on top to do so.

Lewis took a very constructive attitude when people raised the question of Reds in the CIO. "I don't employ people; I just get them to work. Employers hire people."

Ward: There's a famous story of Sidney Hillman (of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers) on the subject of hiring a known Communist, "Oh, it's all right, Brother So-and-So, let me ask you this question: who gets the bird, the hunter or the dog?"

LG: Yes, that was Sidney Hillman's attitude, most of the time. Though later on when he was head of

LG: PAC (the CIO's Political Action Committee) or Labor's Non-Partisan League, he shifted a bit. He came from that old Social Democratic school, but not a bad egg. There was a Labor's Non-Partisan League meeting; Sidney Hillman was out here and I was the head of Labor's Non-Partisan League of California during the same time I was state secretary of the CIO; we had this big gathering; Jerry Posner from the Amalgamated in Los Angeles was there. That's about the time of Lewis' crack, "Clear it with Sidney." I remember the newspapers carried that.

Ward: FDR said that, I think: "Clear it with Sidney."

LG: That could be it, because I remember the Hearst press had little tabs in the newspaper, "Clear It With Sidney". This became a slogan during one of the political campaigns for Roosevelt.

Jerry Posner got up in the midst of this meeting to express his appreciation for everything Sidney Hillman had done for the Amalgamated and he wound up saying, "It's a privilege, a pleasure and a pretty good living to work for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers!" I'll never forget that statement "A privilege, a pleasure and a pretty good living . . ." That was pretty much their attitude -

Ward: There was Morris Zussman, too, remember him?

LG: Yes, and I remember the one who was the biggest pain in the ass of all of them was Jennie Matyas.

Ward: But she was with the ILGWU, not the Amalgamated.

LG: Right, that's right. There were a good number of left-wing unions. The Furniture Workers were left-wing in their thinking, a very aggressive outfit. As a matter of fact, I think Gus Brown was with them at the time, down in Los Angeles where their main base was. Sonia Baltrun, up here with the Textile Workers, a good, solid progressive gal. She had primarily the bag companies, places like Bemis (Bag Company). There was a broad coalition and the State Council was by and large progressive.

Ward: Slim Connelly was the president of the State CIO Council most of the time you were secretary?

LG: Right, right.

Ward: And later on became -

LG: He became secretary - no, no, Rathborne became secretary -

Ward: But wasn't Jim Thimmes of Steel president for a while, while you were secretary?

LG: Right, Jim Thimmes of Steel. Jim Thimmes wasn't the worst guy to work with, but he had a much more restricted vision. He just wanted the job done, period. I think most of these guys knew where I stood on things because I was pretty outspoken. The job was being done and that's all that counted.

Of course, you did a tremendous amount of road work. I got to know every inch of the state because you didn't do it by plane. You were driving that damn car, eight or ten hours all night long. I'm trying to remember the time when John L. Lewis set up District 50.

Ward: That was the catch-all; anybody could belong to District 50, practically.

LG: Yep. In some areas it was just a straight raiding outfit, particularly against groups like the construction workers. I know what Lewis was after. He felt the whole construction industry was so fragmented in these craft unions, doing such a bad job cutting each other's throat and creating all kinds of jurisdictional beefs, like who would install a metal window sash - whether it was a sheet metal worker or a carpenter; who installed a painted panel, or did the painter have to paint it again afterwards. These endless bickerings, you know. Lewis decided something ought to be done, and that's when Denny Lewis*was put in charge.

Oh, I was in L.A. one day and I got a call from Harry that John L. Lewis would be in town the next day and he wanted to have dinner with Harry and

*A brother of John L. Lewis

LG: myself. I got up somewhere around five in the morning and it was a long trip in those days; the road wasn't that good between Los Angeles and San Francisco; two-lane most of the way. The jalopy I had wasn't the best in the world. It was an old Dodge and I'd throw sand bags in the back so the rear end of the car wouldn't go off the road at high speeds.

I got home in time to clean up, shave, change clothes for this dinner. And frankly, I was not terribly alert. Lewis was a very genial and cordial host, a very friendly kind of guy. He could be a charming character when he wanted to, with a marvelous collection of stories. Lewis had very few hobbies; I have never seen him have more than one or two glasses of wine.

But as soon as dinner is finished and the waiter clears away the stuff, Lewis gets right to business. He says, "What I'd like to talk about is what's going to happen in the drive to organize the building trades workers, the construction workers?" Well, Harry and I had talked about that before and pretty well decided that we shouldn't touch the field.

One of the reasons we decided that under no circumstances would we take on any part of this thing, was that even though we had been expelled from the A F of L, we were not isolated. The same thing applied again later on, after our differences with the CIO; but we'll get into that later. Guys like Joe Murphy of the Laborers Union, Dan Del Carlo, men like Ed Rainbow of the old Boilermakers, and guys like Hook and Dillon - we got along with them. We were not going to move into the building trades.

So, Harry turns to me and says, "Why don't you go into this thing?" I start giving various reasons, and frankly some of them were pretty lame, as to why we weren't moving into this District 50 organizing campaign. After all, we were going after bigger game, we were working closely with the guys from the building trades and we had a good coalition around them, they were very pro-CIO; they believed in industrial unionism,

LG: some of them had an old time Wobbly background. I don't think I was persuasive because Lewis turned to me and said, "Well, that's fine Mr. Goldblatt - Lewis always addressed people as Mr., rarely used first names. "You've given about all the reasons why we can't do it. Will you kindly start now on the reasons why we can do it?" And frankly, if there was some way of leaving through a hole in the floor, I would have. It was a most classic put-down, another way of Lewis saying, "Look, cut out the bullshit, I know exactly what you're doing." He was very sharp, you know.

I remember the girls at the office - at that time we were at the Balboa Building on Market Street - when Lewis came by there; I don't think anyone was around other than the girls who were doing their work. I was in L. A., Harry was tied up in something else. Lewis could see that the girls were very edgy. He just sat there and talked to them and looked around the office, the CIO office; Harry was west coast director and I was the so-called northern California director - no salary.

Finally Lewis tried to put the girls at ease and said, "Look, I know why you're uncomfortable, trying to reach Mr. Bridges and Mr. Goldblatt. I'm very happy to see that they're not in the office because I can't see any work that they can get done here - they have to be out in the field where they belong." So, he had that kind of graciousness.

It might have been shortly after the CIO had its convention in San Francisco in 1939. That was a rip roaring convention; Lewis making some classic speeches, some of them only about two or three minutes in length. He was at his best then because the CIO was going great guns. The major industries had been organized.

He was really at the top of the heap at that moment and he talked about coming back in ten years to San Francisco with double the membership. All the young rebels, including myself, were just fascinated with the whole thing; all the visions you have. Things, of course, did not continue

LG: that way because by next year you had a presidential election, 1940.

Ward: Yes, 1940 - that was when he came out for Willkie.

LG: Right. I supported him on Willkie. That was one time when I didn't get a single vote in Local 6. If anybody did agree they sat on their hands. They listened, and I told them point blank I was in favor of Willkie, and it was not just a matter of John L.

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XI END OF WARTIME CONTROLS

"Free Enterprise" Again

Ward: We've pretty well worked over that subject.

LG: Okay. When the war ended, a lot of things broke loose; one was the all-out employer campaign to dump OPA, which they did.

Ward: That was the Office of Price Administration; that was wage and price control.

LG: Wage and price control, right. Price control was pretty effectively maintained, the same way that rationing was. You had a whole country united and moving in the same direction and determined to police each other, the employers, and everything else.

The corner grocer was taking an awful risk to violate any of these price control measures. Remember, the merchants had to post their prices. There were all kinds of people helping to enforce the law. You had everything from neighborhood committees to community organizations, so that when talk goes on these days about controls and legislation without the kind of spirit you had in those days, you know you are being taken for a ride, like the Nixon program on wage and price control.

But the employers' campaign to dump the OPA was successful. In the case of Warehouse, by that time Gene Paton was back from the army, and Pat felt that a certain number of things had been lost

LG: during the war and with the repeal of OPA something ought to be done. We actually did get an interim wage increase; I forgot the exact amount - it started off with 16½ cents at some places, 14½ cents at other places.

Well, a lot of things were also piling up with other parts of the ILWU, particularly in the case of Longshore, and with many maritime unions as well. The Longshore contract, as I recall, expired some time in 1946. Longshore had kept up with the wage situation, the way the regulations read. They didn't have the inequity issue, the principal thing the War Labor Board was playing around with.

During that period I got stabilization of wages in northern California including Sacramento and Stockton. I remember a long War Labor Board hearing in which we picked up vacations with pay for longshoremen. One reason that sticks in my mind is that when I moved up and down California and sometimes to the northwest as well, I'd always drop by and see the ILWU locals in places like Wilmington or Hueneme, where I worked with them very closely during the war.

Bill Gettes was down there; a wonderful guy. When we got into a discussion on something like that vacations with pay, the men used to laugh at me. He said, "Not in longshore. How do you get vacations in casual industry?" I said, "It's not that difficult; our argument is that if you get a certain number of hours in you are entitled to a vacation, that is all." "Ah, we'll never see it."

I could have picked up all kinds of money making bets because these guys are betting men to start with. They were skeptical. Well, sure enough we picked up vacations with pay. We made a number of improvements in the longshore contract, but not a great deal.

Ward: Did Harry play any part in this?

LG: Oh, sure.

Ward: I would think so. But you had your finger in it too?

LG: Yes.

Ward: In other words, you and Harry were in Longshore; considerable teamwork between the two of you?

LG: Oh, yes, sure. I used to sit in in negotiations all the time, and then there was also the business of preparing these cases. Lloyd Fisher was our research man. His background included some work with the War Labor Board. Actually, he was a pretty thorough little guy. He's the man who broke the news to me that Franklin D. Roosevelt had died. He was good; he helped set up the research department. That was before we had Linc Fairley.

We picked up some things, but there was lagging in general. The guys thought that some substantial increases were overdue. Although, I wouldn't say that the unions did that badly during the war period. A lot of them grew by accretion.

Ward: Just more guys working?

LG: More guys working and some unions which had jurisdiction and contracts, like your Boilermakers in the shipyards. All of a sudden there's a tremendous mass organization, calling all these people boilermakers, including the girls who left their secretaries' desks and were welding one small plate. You know, the same one every day, for Kaiser (shipyards).

As a matter of fact it was during that period that George Andersen took a position which many of us found hard to accept because we did not like the idea of having the courts decide an intra-union problem. George was a very stubborn guy; once he made up his mind, he would do it.

We were talking about his role in Hawaii, and sure they tried to move in against us, they moved in the federal courts, they tried to attach all the money; he did yoeman service in the Juneau Spruce thing there, and the fact that we were

LG: under injunction to leave the dough there. That didn't bother George. We needed cash. He just brought it back, that's all.

So George Andersen took up a suit because the Boilermakers had set up black locals and the black locals filed suit, or they wanted to file suit, on the grounds that they had been discriminated against and that they were entitled to equal rights within the union: they could not vote for International officers. I'm not sure that they could even attend conventions. George went ahead with the suit and I think he won it eventually. He was that kind of a persistent cuss.

There was a backlog of all kinds of things that had been dormant during the war. We decided it would be a good idea to see whether we could pull together something on the waterfront again. The Maritime Federation had done a very effective job in '35 - '36. Eventually, the thing fell apart, primarily because the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, particularly Lundeberg, was determined to see the thing go by the boards.

Lundeberg was an odd character that way. As a matter of fact, I'd say that after 1936, all of Lundeberg's strikes were against other unions; nothing against the employers. He had the Red horrors until hell wouldn't have it. As a matter of fact, at one point he even made a deal with Dave Beck. I think that's one of the reasons they took us on in the 1948 Longshore strike. Of course, Taft-Hartley combined.

Lundeberg and Beck assured the employers that the waterfront could be opened during the Longshore strike. Lundeberg would man the ships and Beck would supply the longshoremen. Beck, of course, had a running battle with our guys. He came from Seattle and he tried to enforce teamster jurisdiction to include everything on wheels; that was his first slogan.

Well, the jitneys on the waterfront which they used to pull these trailers, and the fork lifts were on wheels and he tried to extend this whole crazy craft concept to the point where that work,

LG: too, should be covered by the Teamsters Union. Well, you see what the consequences of that would be on the waterfront - it would be no dice. Beck took a lead in taking on the ILWU. As a matter of fact, he wrecked a good part of our organization in Seattle where Bert Nelson was in charge, and Bruce Hannon. Bruce Hannon later turned up as a witness against Harry. What happened to him I don't know, because initially he was an awfully good guy.

Of course, Nelson remained a solid citizen all his life and still is, even though he had a terrible time getting back in that local after he went underground for a while during that (anti-Communist) Smith Act period. Of course, he was a known left-winger and known Communist. I don't know how many years it took battling to get him back on the waterfront. After we got him back, he still wasn't in the union. He was a good man and I used to see a good deal of him when I went up to Seattle, after I became secretary of the ILWU.

There were fist fights almost every day with the Teamsters because it was an open raid against the ILWU; anything and everything we had. The Warehouse local in Seattle was under a guy named Hugh Bradshaw; he was a cocky little guy. Our man had a rough, rough time and lost a good deal of what they had organized. In Portland, we had a flourishing Warehouse local and that was pretty well taken apart by the Teamsters. Some very violent battles around there. A lot of them wound up in fist fights.

Lundeberg was really tied in there, particularly when it came to opposing the ILWU; he was completely locked in with Beck. On the same redbaiting kick, of course. The Sailors Union paper was just one piece of vitriol from beginning to end with attacks on the leftwing; Commie, everything was Commie, you see.

Of course the Maritime Federation couldn't last very long under those circumstances. It pretty well ran out of business shortly after 1936. One of the reasons was when Lundeberg had

LG: a chance to settle, he moved in without consulting the other unions and actually started a back to work movement; a terrible fight there around who would control the Voice Of The Federation. You might remember Barney Mayes.

Ward: Oh, yes, Barney Mayes. I remember Lundeberg talking to the Newspaper Guild, trying to get support for Barney. We sat on our hands, listened to him, and didn't do anything.

LG: The Guild was a good friend of the ILWU. So, that's some of the background; this rubbed off on some of the other unions. Not the Marine Cooks and Stewards - they were a good progressive union and stayed with us all through this fight. You had guys like Hugh Bryson in there, and oh, Nate Jacobson was in there at the time; Joe Johnson was in there; Eddie Tangen; and they had a pretty good progressive crew on board the ships, the Marine Cooks.

The Marine Firemen vacillated all over the place; for a while they were fairly good and some of them remained quite good. After all, guys like Walter Stack came out of there and at one time, even an official of the Marine Firemen. When Vince Malone became secretary of the Marine Firemen, they moved pretty well to the right. Very cautious and sometimes wound up with Lundeberg, but not all the time.

Well, the reason I mention these things is to try to give you a bit of a picture as to what things were like at the end of the war. The Marine Engineers were not too bad. Randolph Merriwether and his side kick, Jerome (I forget his first name) were very close to the ILWU on a personal basis. I liked Randy Merriwether. We got along very well together.

On the other hand, the Master, Mates and Pilots were impossible. Captain (Charles F.) May, Christ Almighty; sometimes he'd run competition with Lundeberg to see who could be the worst redbaiter; one of the first guys to use blacklisting against progressives. There were some great guys who served in Spain - George Dwain Morrell, I think was one of them - he's still around, by the way.

LG: He had a hell of a time; during the war he finally got somewhere because they just needed skippers - a very competent skipper. I think after the war he lost out again. The radio operators on the other hand, also worked out on deck. Zig Zag Brown - remember him?

Ward: Oh, yes, Z.R. Brown, sure.

LG: He was active in the CIO Council in San Francisco - he was with the Radio Operators. Somebody tagged him Zigzag Brown for Z.R. Brown. All around the waterfront people picked up titles very fast - nicknames - a glossary of those names would be good!

I recall people would listen in on the radio when we had radio dispatch of the longshoremen because that saved gasoline; a guy didn't have to come all the way down to the hall to get his job. He could listen in: "Gang So and So at such and such a pier." They ordered mainly by gang.

A lot of people would listen in because of the color of the radio broadcast. Mike Quin was doing the broadcast. I knew Mike from way back in the 30s, in Los Angeles; we used to kick around together. People would listen in to the radio broadcasts just for the colorful names, you know, like Banana Nose Sullivan and Stinky Foot Gus' gang. Mike knew the value of this, because he built up a terrific audience. He also did our general broadcast.

Mike once wrote a piece on "The Death of a Ship", one of the finest pieces of writing I think I ever read; very touching, very close; people called up and asked for a copy of that broadcast, and one of them was Roger Lapham. Roger was a guy in his own right, one of the last of the old pirates.

That's the background generally; that span of time just between 1937 and '41 was characterized by some very abrasive battles within the maritime unions; very sad thing, because the employers played it right to the hilt.

LG: Remember, during that time you had the old Waterfront Employers Association which was the mainstay of the San Francisco Employers Council, with Frank P. Foisie and Gregory Harrison really ruling the roost. Foisie was, I guess, the originator of the Blue Book hiring hall, a company hiring hall they had set up. It used to be called the Fink Hall and he was called Fink Hall Foisie.

Gregory Harrison was a bitter, hard guy. He was with Brobeck, Phleger and Harrison, very powerful law firm in San Francisco. It is still one of the most prestigious and also very close to the State Department. Herman Phleger, particularly, had been part of the unofficial cabinet for a number of presidents. I think he was one of the architects of the Cold War too.

Harrison was stamped in that same image. I'll tell you a bit more about him when we get to the 1948 longshore strike; they were in charge, you know. It was Foisie and Harrison who ran all these ads and publicity statements about the number of work stoppages on the waterfront. They are the ones who contrived the "ghost town" business; San Francisco had been turned into a ghost town by Bridges and the ILWU.

The Waterfront Employers was a powerful group, and they had the employers by the short hair. They had a tremendous amount of discipline in the organization. And, of course, a guy like Foisie wouldn't see anything wrong with using somebody like Lundeberg, so the disruption continued unabated.

It was during that period that it became evident that the only people Lundeberg would fight were other unions. For example, he undertook a running raid against one of the locals of the ILWU, the Scalers, of all things. The Scalers did some of the hardest and dirtiest work there is around the goddam waterfront, cleaning out bilge tanks.

I remember taking one of those jobs for about two days and saying, "Never again - I don't know how I'll get by, but -" That was too much for me.

LG: It was made up of a crew about as mixed as you could find; blacks, Mexicans, Spanish, some Italians. It was hard, dirty work, chipping, cleaning out the bilge tanks, general clean-up of the holds, and so forth.

Lundeberg conducted a regular raid against them because they had a little bit of work that wasn't quite as mean; once in a while they would load a few stores, but loading stores was also supposed to be longshoremen's work. It was one of those areas of controversy and Lundeberg put up this big campaign, obviously with the agreement of the employers, to get that work.

The real purpose behind it was not a lack of jobs on the part of the sailors; that was not the problem. Lundeberg decided he wanted a shore crew. These were shoreside sailors, sailors who would not go to sea. But bear in mind with a sea-going union most of your members are not around when you are holding meetings. The only time you see them is when there is a strike. And Lundeberg's device was very simple: he was going to have a shoreside crew under his Sailors' contract, and he would also have himself a palace guard. These were the guys who were used for all kinds of heavy duty and this became part of his machine.

Ward: He needed a machine, yeah.

LG: Yeah. So, all these things were going on; it was an endless sort of - not just a polemic kind of fight, but also an economic one in the continuous raid. Relations were not just brittle, they were broken off.

Nevertheless, we decided toward the tail end of the war when everybody knew that it was just a matter of months, because the Nazis had fallen in Europe and Japan was folding up, that the situation was ripe to make another push to try to get some maritime unity. We ought to try to move on a unified basis because all the contracts were running out in June, 1946. That was one aspect of our discussions.

LG: There were endless discussions because some of the theoreticians, particularly left-wing theoreticians, had come along with their economic analysis of the post war era, namely, that with the ending of the war a depression was imminent because of the whole diversion of the productive capacity into the war effort.

In the course of the discussion a number of us, myself included, decided that this estimate was wrong. I recall some pretty hot discussions. And discussions with party people; they had gotten their economic theories, I guess, from Victor Perlo.

Ward: Yes, he was the great left-wing economist.

LG: The importance of the economic discussion was that if the outlook was towards an imminent depression and the falling off of both work and the ability to fight - which go hand in hand during a depression - there would be one type of trade union approach.

If, on the other hand, we were convinced that there was so much pent up purchasing power, - even though it was damn small compared to what the employers made during the war period, together with the fact that a lot of consumer goods had not been made available - when this thing was let loose in the market it would not be a period of immediate economic decline.

That was before the Korean War, which wasn't until 1950. The immediate post war era would see a pretty halcyon economic scene. That was our conclusion. That, of course, made a big difference in terms of what the devil you go for. Do you put up a big push for wages, improvements and so forth like Gene Paton began to move in warehouse, or do you get yourself ready for a defensive fight, a holding action.

Unions don't live outside the economic scene. Anyway, as I said, we reached the conclusion that there was a good deal of purchasing power around and that there would be a period of economic

LG: stability, if not prosperity, in the postwar period. The employers also reached the same conclusion; one of the most effective arguments they had in getting rid of OPA, which was as specious as a $3 bill, was that the demand was there, people wanted things. The reason the employers couldn't produce was because of all these artificial restrictions on prices.

Yes, some prices might go up a little bit but then they would come down very quickly with the competition in the market place. All the laissez-faire economics beautifully spelled out, leaving aside just a few little things, as you know, in the system of price-fixing, monopoly capitalism and everyting else.

This is the simplistic kind of approach that they used, and a number of people fell for it. They literally believed that the consumer demand would be quickly taken care of in a pretty equitable fashion if you got rid of OPA because that was bothering the employers and interfering with the free operation of all these wonderful economic forces we have going for us in this country.

Well, this is part of the economic background; our conclusion was that while OPA might be repealed, we thought the time had come for a good, first class push in the economic field. I'll admit we were also getting a lot of flak, particularly on some of Harry's ideas about oh, indefinite extension of five year contracts, five year no-strike pledge to continue -

Ward: Oh, he wanted to do that, uh?

LG: Oh, sure; during the war Harry had issued some statements that perhaps we ought to continue the no-strike pledge for another five years when the war was over. Obviously, this did not last too long. So, we went into these meetings on postwar negotiations - it must have been the end of 1945 or early part of 1946.

The Committee For Maritime Unity

LG: After talking to outfits like the Marine Cooks and Stewards, the ACA radio operators and some people in the Marine Firemen, it was clear that we could pull together; at least some joint coordinated bargaining, if not joint negotiations. As a result we had the first meeting of the Committee for Maritime Unity; that convention was held at the old Eagles Hall, the one on Golden Gate (Avenue, San Francisco).

Ward: Joe Curran came out for that, didn't he?

LG: Joe Curran was at the meeting for the NMU; Hugh Bryson of the Marine Cooks was there; Vince Malone was there; Joe Selly was there of the ACA, the radio operators. I think the convention was held the early part of 1946. It was one hell of a good convention - lot of rank and file representation right off the ships. NMU had a big delegation here because the NMU had a lot of jobs out here during the war with very active officers and some good people around.

Ward: They had a hiring hall down on the front?

LG: They had a hiring hall on the front and the Marine Cooks and Stewards, of course, were there in force. The Marine Firemen had a good sized delegation; ACA did. I think those were the only unions present besides the ILWU. Whether the (Marine) Engineers took part in that meeting I'm not sure.

But the spirit was there, no question about it, and the CMU really took off. It just flew. It caught on at once on the entire west coast; we were all shooting towards a common expiration date and a national shut-down if we didn't get what we wanted.

Well, at the convention Curran and Bridges were elected co-chairmen. It was not a formal, constitutionally constructed organization as such.

LG: What it amounted to was establishment of work rules with the object to get a job done in negotiations, and to see where we go from there. I was elected secretary. Curran had a candidate, but frankly I don't think he was that serious about it himself.

The candidate was Hoyt Haddock; he was in charge of the NMU office in Washington, D. C.; not a bad egg, but Hoyt was never looking for extra work, and definitely not looking for any trouble. I guess Curran told him, "You better run for the job too," but I had no trouble at all being elected.

So I became secretary of the CMU, which in many ways became somewhat pivotal. Where you don't have a constitutional organization with specific authority and two strong people as co-chairmen, Curran and Harry, with not exactly identical thinking - which later became more and more evident - then what automatically happens is that one person on whom a lot of this devolves is the secretary. At least he has to continue to be in a position to talk to everybody and try to keep whatever structure there is together.

During that same time I think Curran was already having a lot of internal fights, many of them brought on by himself against the left in the NMU. This later of course jelled in the form of an all-out campaign by Curran to dump guys like Blackie Meyers and Howard McKenzie and others. It included even an attempt to dump Ferdinand Smith, which I don't think worked out. Ferdinand Smith died, you know.

Ward: Ferdinand Smith was a black man, wasn't he?

LG: Yes - a black man, hell of a good man, too. Anyway, notwithstanding some of the internecine troubles in the NMU, the program itself caught on. The unions began their negotiations, not all of them negotiating in the same place. The Marine Firemen, Marine Cooks and Stewards, radio operators for the west coast ships were negotiating here, of course. The principal NMU negotiations were back east with the employers primarily based in New York.

LG: Well, negotiations in the case of the ILWU did not go too badly; I'd say we were not too far away from an agreement, with a good many of the issues resolved. On the money question, I think that was completely resolved. We had set a June 15th strike deadline.

Following the convention we decided we might as well push the thing in the form of genuine national collective bargaining. And our hunch was correct that the government was not just going to sit around and watch this thing. So we began our discussions and reached the conclusion that once the government began to move, we would use that at once to move the negotiations from their respective areas like San Francisco and New York City to Washington, D. C.

Well, a number of things came to a head at the same time. You might recall that just prior to June, the railroads were about to walk out; I think led primarily by (Alexander F.) Whitney. Truman (President Harry S.) went before Congress in a performance that Wayne Morse (U. S. Senator from Oregon) called the biggest "ham act" he'd ever seen. And I'll tell you why in a minute.

Truman tried to get special government authority that in the event the railroad workers walked out they would be conscripted in the army and ordered back on the trains; this was a national disaster that was looming. The reason Wayne Morse characterized it the way he did was that Morse had gotten word, as did other people in Washington, that Whitney had called off the railroad strike an hour before Truman went to Congress.

But Truman was determined to ride this tide and be a great president. Mind you, Truman had not been in office all that long; he'd been around after Roosevelt died in 1944, so I guess he'd been in office perhaps a year -

Ward: Wait a minute, Roosevelt died April 12, 1945.

LG: He died just before the war ended, that's right. So Truman had only been around about a year, and he was flexing his muscles and exercising leadership. He was successful, and under very bitter

LG: circumstances the railroad guys became extremely unhappy. They finally did settle, but their plans went down the drain - an ineffective national railroad strike. That might have been the foundation of the United Railroad Workers; a new organization came about.

Anyway, this was the atmosphere when we hit Washington. We went through a round robin of negotiations that went about two weeks, and these negotiations were really weird. All kinds of people got in the act; you didn't start until about 3 or 4 in the afternoon and it was very common for the negotiations to go on to 2 or 3 in the morning.

A Question Of Sleep

LG: Well, because of the time difference between the east coast and the west coast, I would have to be on the teletype, because we had a teletype hookup with all the main ports on both the east coast and the west coast. At the appointed time all those teletypes were hooked in. We'd give these conference messages, including answering questions. So, I had to be on the teletype somewhere around oh, between 8:30 and 9:00 in the morning.

Ward: Back east?

LG: Back east. I had to be ready about 9 o'clock in the morning for the transmission because they would get it first thing in the morning about six o'clock. They had all kinds of strike meetings being set up; a lot of steam.

The demands in the main were the usual demands. They were nothing earth-shaking in terms of issues about the hiring hall; those were pretty well established. We were on the move. The employers were on the defensive, particularly on the west coast where they had been conducting all the propaganda about the ghost town and the ghost ports.

LG: Our demands in the ILWU were not all that elaborate. In the case of the seamen, what complicated them was their demand for the 40-hour week at sea and that any work beyond 40 hours was overtime, not compensatory time off in port. Whether that was the best program in the world, I don't know, but in terms of immediate cash on hand, it sure was a big one. And they had a whole series of other demands, part of the business of trying to catch up with some of the things that the longshoremen had picked up.

Ward: Now, when you said the seamen, you meant the Marine Firemen and Marine Cooks?

LG: Marine Firemen and Marine Cooks. So by the time the negotiations were finished and I'd get a couple of hours sleep, I had to start preparing the reports and then come at the appointed time, 8:30 or 9:00 o'clock, for the reports to go out on the teletype.

It was a hectic period because you had both your daytime discussions among the guys, your evening meetings, which were not just with government people. Pretty soon the whole CIO entourage showed up; you know, they had to keep an eye on things; not terribly friendly to us, let me tell you.

The CIO felt we were running off with one of these wild leftwing affairs, even though we had the thing under good control. We also thought we could win. During that period I'd never get breakfast until around 10 in the morning and I'd had damn little sleep -

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Ward: Yes, now about that breakfast business.

LG: Oh, it was rough going. By the time I got to breakfast I was pretty punchy and I had already put in a day's work, with meetings winding up at two or three in the morning or later. And I ordered the same thing - a half dozen oysters or cherrystone clams, a double shot of whiskey, and ham and eggs - scrambled eggs.

LG: And after about three days of this, they knew me down at this restaurant. I think it was MacDonald's, one of the nicer restaurants. I'd walk in there and the waiter would start bringing these things without asking a question. I survived on this because sometimes you got lunch and sometimes you didn't.

We would go into our own huddles at 12 o'clock - one o'clock. Our huddles would last until around late afternoon and then the sessions would start with the employers, the government and the CIO all sitting around. They would start around anywhere from nine or ten o'clock at night and then go on into the night.

Well, it was a fascinating set of negotiations. Harry did a masterful job. He kept shoving them up against this June 15th deadline - no budging of any kind. On June 15th, the guys walk. True, we didn't have the ILA with us and true we didn't have the SUP (Sailors' Union of the Pacific) with us, but there's enough power going there to shut down both coasts between the NMU on the east coast, the radio operators on the east coast. One group that came along with us was led by Randolph Meriwether. I dragged him back there -

Ward: Marine Engineers?

LG: Right. Meriwether said after the negotiations were over, "Christ Almighty, Lou, you drag me back there and I figured this whole thing was just a pile of horseshit and what happens? I come up with the golden horseshoe." They picked up all kinds of gains. He came back a complete hero. The Marine Engineers had a tentative agreement which they amended to bring in the gains picked up in the CMU negotiations.

Well, we worked toward this deadline. The crisis in negotiations came when Truman announced - still full of confidence and bad judgment as a result of his "victory" over the railroad workers - four days, maybe five, before the June 15th deadline that in the event this strike took place by the CMU, the army would be ordered to load the ships and the Coast Guard to man them and to sail them.

LG: That started a terrifically hectic period in the Washington office, where we had this improvised office with the teletype machine, a couple of secretaries constantly taking letters and making reports out. Keeping every single port abreast of things was a job by itself; unless you did that job well things would begin to unravel down below.

International Solidarity

LG: Luckily, we had the list of most of the unions we could reach in other countries, such as the Waterside Workers in Australia, Waterside Workers in New Zealand; the French who all belonged to the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail), the longshoremen and the seamen both; the Italians who were just starting the CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana Del Lavoro) again. I met Giuseppe DiVittorio I think the year before. He had been in prison under Mussolini. He was the first head of CGIL after the war.

Ward: DiVittorio came out here in April of '45 -

LG: He was the head of CGIL after he got out of jail.

Ward: He was one of the big names.

LG: He became president of the CGIL. As a matter of fact, he came out to San Francisco with his new bride, Anita, a very lovely woman.

Ward: Yes, Angela (Ward) was her interpreter.

LG: Yes. They spent practically all their time at our house, you know. Oh, DiVittorio was a marvelous guy. How the hell he managed to survive those 11 or 12 years he was in prison and come out as a whole person - it's amazing.

Tremendous courage and inquisitive about the union - he didn't bother about contract details or any crap like that. But he would ask endless questions about the way the union machinery operated, the input by the membership, the

LG: operation of committees, conventions. It was only after days of questioning that he said, "You have a union that will make it."

Ward: All right, so what about the British?

LG: The British trade unions, yes. We started sending all these wires out telling what Truman had done and within 24 to 48 hours wires started coming back from all parts of the world that if any attempt was made by the U. S. government to load the ships with troops and man them with Coast Guard strikebreakers, those ships would just sit when they got to the foreign harbors.

Truman had all kinds of power in this country, but there wasn't a hell of a lot he could do about that. And to watch the thing develop in those negotiations was just a delight, of course. The shipowners were sitting back waiting for the government to step into the picture, as they did in the case of the railroads.

Once the government had done that the employers would dictate the terms of the settlement. But they had no answer to this thing, and we told the entire membership and made the whole thing as public as we could, the support we had and that those ships would just sit there and not be handled once they hit the foreign ports. I'm convinced the workers there would have carried it through, too.

So, in the last days of the negotiations, you could see the employers start to collapse. I'll never forget a classic statement there one night. Harry wouldn't even modify the demands one inch, just sat there with the demands, waiting for the employers to crack.

I forget who the employer spokesman was at the time, Foisie or Harrison, who finally got around to telling Harry, "Well, we don't even have the slightest idea what you will settle for; I just think you guys are looking for a strike and that's all there is to it." And Harry turned to this guy and said, "Well, there's an easy way to find out." "How?" "Just dangle a couple of pork chops out there and see what happens." (laughter)

LG: So, the shipowners began to crack. The longshoremen already had a fairly good agreement, a couple of small things to pick up; not much in it for us. There was a great deal in it for the seamen. They picked up the 40-hour week at sea, a number of other demands and it was the biggest wage increase in the history of the maritime industry.

It was in the main a money agreement, but also caught up with many years of sitting tight and also caught up after some of the developments after OPA. It was not an easy set of negotiations.

The CIO decided that we were just a bit too much; not that things had been all that friendly with Phil Murray but at least it had been a stand-off, cordial. There was no Cold War as yet. I'm trying to recall, oh yes, Fulton, Missouri might have taken place by then. (The famous "Iron Curtain" speech by Winston Churchill, former prime minister of England).

Either that or it was Phil Murray's general conservative bent. After all, he wasn't all that much of a left-winger. He had none of the daring, none of the flair of John L. Lewis.

Ward: Well, that pretty well tells the story of the CMU.

LG: Only one incident that should not be forgotten. We were getting to the point where our own guys got jumpy too; approaching a strike deadline. It's not going to be an easy strike.

The government sure as hell made its position plain, as far as they were concerned, if they could break our ass, they would do it. We were determined to go ahead. We had the steam; we had not only the power to pull it but to hold it; there was the kind of unity drive down among the men, just a mix of seamen and longshoremen and warehousemen pitching in.

But these tensions built up; I remember leaving one of the union caucuses to go out to get a sandwich or something; I wasn't gone more than twenty minutes. It was just the union guys

LG: sitting around, a small committee; Joe Selly was there, Vince Malone was there, Hugh Bryson I believe was there for the Marine Cooks and Stewards; Curran I think was there, yes, and Harry.

I come back and here's Joe Selly standing there and blood is running down from his forehead. Apparently, Vince Malone did not like that kind of pressure. While he was a tough egg in many ways, I don't think he was too happy with what he saw shaping up. This thing was running out from under him and Vince had done pretty well, you know, walking this tight rope, staying pretty close to Lundeberg and not being completely unfriendly to us, you see.

So, Vince apparently took offense at some remark that Selly had made. I gather it didn't mean a damn thing; it was not a personal remark, but Vince jumped up and whacked Selly. The ring on Malone's hand had cut this gash. Talk about a guy who kept his cool, Joe Selly just stood there, took out a handkerchief because the blood was running very badly. I think he still carries the scar.

He just continued as though nothing had happened. He was not going to let this thing fly apart, you see. He was that disciplined a guy. As a matter of fact, I helped convince Jimmy Hoffa years later to give him a charter in the Teamsters Union for what was around of the ACA. So, it was a big victory, although the CMU did not last too long after that.

Ward: But it lasted long enough to pull that one out?

LG: Oh, yes, it was the '46 victory. The strike did not take place. The contracts were settled right on the deadline, about an hour before the strike. I remember we negotiated all that night and finally finished it up.

Ward: And then you went to sleep for a while?

LG: Yeah, finally got some sleep. I got back to the coast and that in itself was a pleasure. I could take so much of Washington; that particular snake

LG: dance with the Labor Department, which wasn't a goddam bit of use; the CIO chewing away at us; the administration out to break the strike; not a pleasant scene.

I came back to the coast and it was not too long after that when I took the Matsonia down to Hawaii. Jim Blaisdell was on board and we had some crazy scenes there with him and the Marine Cooks and Stewards. It was a great trip although I took the trip so as to sleep. It didn't work out that way at all. On the other hand, it was such a wonderful change and relaxation; it was a lot of fun.

Ward: How long were you in Washington on that deal? Two or three weeks? A month?

LG: About three weeks. There was no break in those sessions. There were no Saturdays and Sundays off, or evenings off.

Ward: I'm not surprised that you developed a little heart trouble afterwards.

LG: Oh, no - that was a long time afterwards.

Ward: I know, but those things add up.

LG: Oh, yes.

(Interview 18: 18 July, 1978)

Ward: You had some tag ends you wanted to talk about on the CMU business.

LG: Not awfully important, but in looking back at the thing, it was really the beginning of a new era. What I'm talking about is the beginning of the Cold War and its impact on the CMU.

Ward: Let's get the year again - was that '46?

LG: That would be late 1946 or early 1947.

Ward: That's right - you weren't sure whether it was before or after the Fulton, Missouri speech?

LG: I'm not sure myself. There's no question what the atmosphere was. Joe Curran was embarked in a program of cleaning out anybody who might be opposed to him and to get rid of the CMU. He felt that this would become too nettlesome for him to handle: one to which the membership of the NMU really looked in terms of cohesive action around maritime agreements.

Of course, the thing made a lot of sense and accomplished a very big job in 1946. Harry finally made a flat proposition to Joe Curran: he said, "Look, if the question is one of my being a co-chairman with you, I'll resign and you take over the chairmanship on your own and Lou can continue there as secretary, but at least try to keep the machinery going."

Curran wasn't having any part of it, though; he was determined to see the thing went down the drain. Things wound up in a very dramatic meeting in the NMU headquarters. I went there to talk to Joe and I don't know how the word got around the hall, but pretty soon that room we were meeting in was just jammed with guys, shoulder to shoulder and back to back.

You couldn't squeeze another guy in there and they were overflowing into the corridor. I went through all these things about trying to maintain the CMU, though keeping cool in that situation was sort of difficult.

Ward: These guys were Joe's machine?

LG: No, no! all supporters of the CMU!

Ward: Oh, oh!

LG: Yep -

Ward: Joe had a little trouble keeping his cool, then, didn't he?

LG: And how! Well, Joe can be very abrasive when he is determined to break off with somebody; plus he was already beginning to apply a pretty heavy-handed way of running things around the NMU. But if somebody had lit a match around that place, it would have exploded, and that might have been the terminationa of Joe's presidency. But none of it availed and the CMU went down the drain.

Ward: Did you have anything to do with getting the guys in the room?

LG: No, as a matter of fact, as far as I knew it was going to be a small meeting, Curran and myself and perhaps a couple of officers.

Effects Of The Cold War

LG: The only reason I'm picking this up is that, no question in my mind, things were beginning to change very rapidly.

By that time, I think Truman had learned how to take Murray in tow. Murray had access to the White House - through the kitchen door or where, I'm not sure, or the servants' entrance.

Ward: Well, John L. Lewis talked about it one time at a dinner at the Mark Hopkins. Weren't you and Harry and George Wilson also present? He talked about a tunnel leading from somewhere in Lafayette Park into the White House which Roosevelt offered him the free use. He bragged about it and said he didn't need to use it, but he could use it any time he wanted. Maybe that's what Truman offered Phil Murray?

LG: Well, Phil Murray accepted; put it that way. Things became more and more abrasive with the Marshall Plan. A lot of those things came to a head I guess in 1948, during the Wallace campaign. Anyway, these were the first indications; there were other signs of the thing that manifested itself later. Oh, bear in mind that 1947 saw the advent of the Taft-Hartley law -

Ward: But Truman did veto that, didn't he?

LG: Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley bill. Now, the question of whether or not Truman did all he could do to have his veto upheld remains in doubt. The veto was overridden by only two votes, I believe, and there were two senators in Europe - one of whom claimed he was under the weather - both of which were supposed to be sure votes.

Whether Truman exerted all the influence and pressure he could to get those votes back in time has always been a subject of debate. So, whether there was a veto and a wink, I don't know; or a veto by figuring "I'll do that and that's enough, and then let nature take its course."

So, Taft-Hartley came along and we went into an extremely difficult and arduous period in the life of the ILWU. Things piled up on us very, very quickly. There was the pineapple strike in 1947; there was a so-called Ignacio revolt in 1947, and there was a longshore strike in 1948 on the Pacific Coast.

There was a longshore strike in Hawaii in 1949; there was a big warehouse strike in the bay area in 1949; there was the indictment of Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt in 1949 in the midst of the Hawaii longshore strike; there was the expulsion from the CIO.

It encompasses about five or six very intensive years and they sort of blend together with the Cold War, the war in Korea, Taft-Hartley. For a period you couldn't help but feel every morning that the circle was getting tighter around you; an attack on every flank. The Taft-Hartley affidavits led to an enormous debate.

The only man taking an excellent position on that was John L. Lewis who said, "What if nobody signs?" That would have been the end of that, but the AFofL and CIO folded. The net result was that unions were pushed into very difficult positions.

LG: The CIO was determined to try to put us out of business. The AFofL was attacking at the same time. There was a counter-attack by the employers in Hawaii.

The Pacific Coast maritime employers decided to take on the longshoremen and finish that job once and for all, but as a matter of fact it finished the Waterfront Employers Association instead. Even the Catholic church was extremely active in the unions at that point in attempts to set up the ACTU - the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, including setting up a chapter in San Francisco. We were literally fighting for survival.

One of the things that held us together was the tradition of militancy, a deep loyalty on the part of the membership and a willingness to struggle instead of backing away from these beefs. But other things had to take place, pulling in our organizational lines, like some of the places we had organized, small places in Chicago, New Orleans, Minneapolis; there was no way of hanging on to them during this era.

So, there was something of shortening our lines, but we did survive. What happened in these individual situations I guess sort of opens up a new background of the history of the ILWU and that's the reason for some of this preliminary stuff.

"Hawaii For The Hawaiians"

Ward: Well, now, which phase would you like to tackle first; Hawaii maybe?

LG: That might be just as easy as anything else. I think it's awfully important to understand Jack Hall's role. Jack, in addition to everything else, was not only a skilled organizer, but a very competent guy when it came to understanding the industry he was dealing with - knowing

LG: something about it, excellent in the whole field of research, statistics, and getting the factual background nailed down.

His records of some of the negotiations are so detailed and comprehensive, and he had one of those memories that everything was well put away, to be brought back another date. So, his role in the thing is not to be underestimated.

Ward: Yes, you've made that abundantly clear; he was a sharp and valuable person.

LG: And the role of the Hawaiians there is interesting. There are a number of Hawaiian guys who were extremely active in the organizational push. We had a group over from Hawaii going to the Labor School.* I recall Freddie Kamahoahoa was one, Dave Thompson was another, Saburo Fujisaki, and a number of others. I think Tom Yagi was there and we put them all through the Labor School.

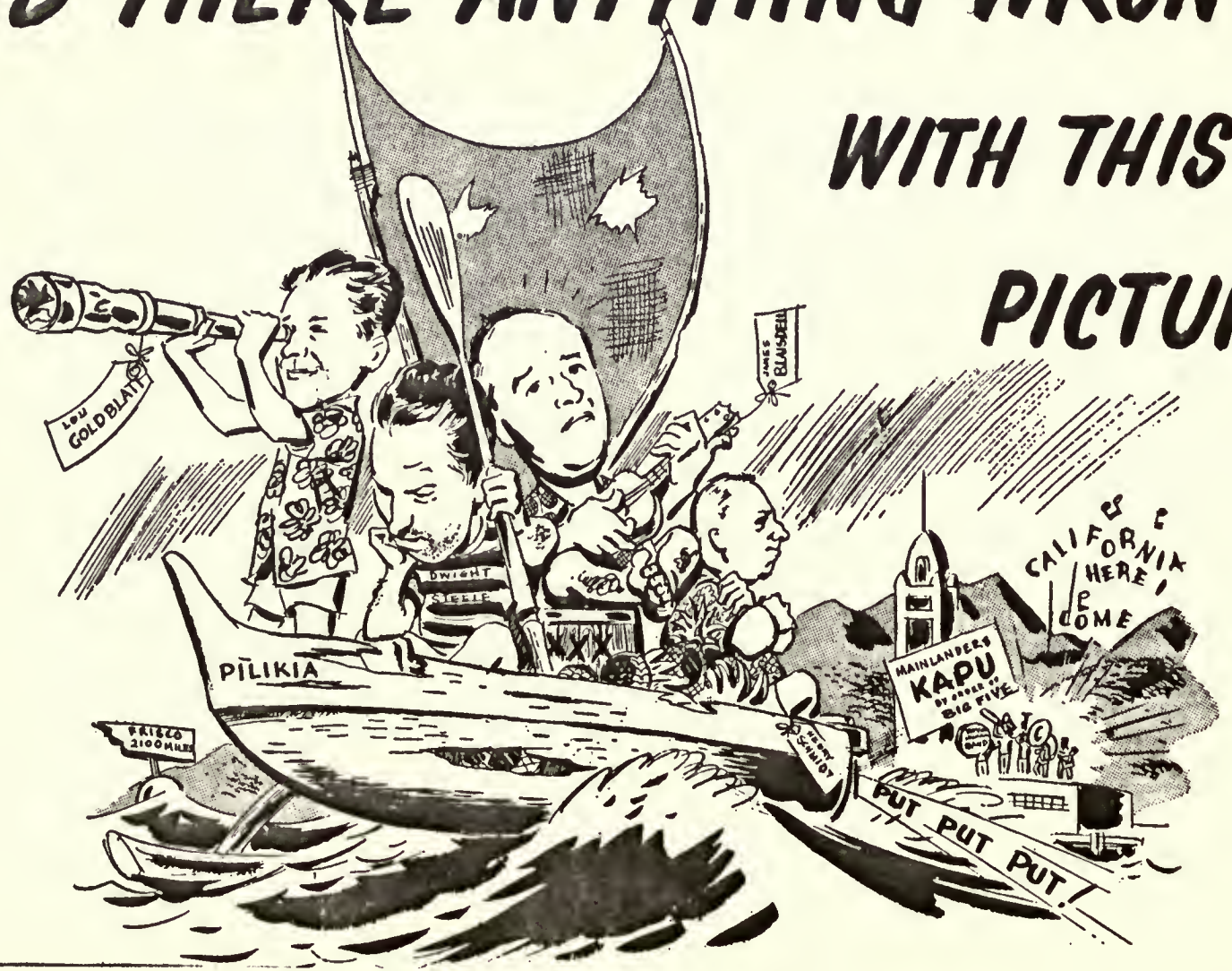
They got a lot of basic education and also spent some time with the International guys; sat in on our meetings and what have you. In addition to guys like Freddie, you had Benny Big Nose Kahaawinui, guys like Julian Napuunua, Joe Kealaleo, Joe Keawe, who was a very good guitarist and singer who I think has given away all kinds of hit records.

They take them for a ride - the old Hawaii system called manuwahi, free, the way the Big Five used to get their entertainment. They'd invite some of the boys up to play their guitars and get a free meal and a few drinks; that was it. They did not see cash; there was no need for it. They were living in beautiful Hawaii, so what would you need cash for, other than the fact that living there is about 25 percent higher.

Samoba was another - a very tough egg and a very good guy. Benny Awana and Lionel - I forget

*California Labor School, San Francisco

IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



The "characters" in this picture are (according to seniority):

James P. Blaisdell — President, Hawaii Employers Council. Formerly President of Association of San Francisco Distributors (Employers Hui). Arrived in Hawaii in 1944. Malihini.

Louis Goldblatt—Secretary-Treasurer of the ILWU; Secretary Pro tem of Committee for Maritime Unity and spokesman for the union in sugar negotiations. First came to Hawaii 18 months ago. Malihini.

Dwight C. Steele—Vice-President of Hawaii Employers Council; Spokesman for sugar industry in negotiations. Took Mr. Blaisdell's place as head of the Association of San Francisco Distributors. Came to Hawaii 8months ago. Malihini.

Henry Schmidt — Member Pacific Coast Labor Relations Committee; ILWU member and former president of San Francisco Longshore Local; spokesman for union in longshore negotiations. Came to Hawaii 7 months ago. Malihini.

The Big Five have spearheaded their anti-union drive with an attack against "mainland labor leaders."

Inasmuch as the Big Five believes that "malihinis" are the cause of their troubles, we are making them the following proposition: LET'S HAVE OUR MR. GOLDBLATT AND MR. SCHMIDT, TOGETHER WITH YOUR MR. BLAISDELL AND MR. STEELE RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO AT ONCE.

It's O. K. with Goldblatt and Schmidt, so how about a little kokua from the Big Five to make arrangements with Blaisdell and Steele. We won't even ask for the deportation of Rinehart, Troy, Meley, Sutton, Langstroth, and the other Malihinis who make up the staff of the Hawaii Employers Council.

Of course, getting rid of these four Malihinis might not solve the labor difficulties in Hawaii. There are the small questions of wages, hours, working conditions, housing, seniority, pensions and a dozen others that remain unsettled.

But, at least, this will be a start—along the lines suggested by the Big Five.

If the pilikia doesn't end when these four leave, we will keep getting rid of Malihinis. We can ship out the ones who have been here 5 years or less. If that doesn't settle things we will take the ones who have been here 10 years and arrange for their deportation to the mainland. And so on right down the line. This might get a little embarrassing to the Big Five. WE HAVE MADE A CAREFUL CHECK OF ALL THE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY AND WE FIND THAT THE BIG FIVE WERE NOT HERE WHEN HAWAII WAS DISCOVERED. THEY AREN'T EVEN RELATED TO THE MENEHUNES. THAT MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT THEY TOO ARE MALIHINIS.

So we will soon get to the point where we send the Big Five back to where they came from, and give Hawaii back to the Hawaiians. (There are quite a few people who think this is a good idea.)

Another problem will arise, but we can face it when we come to it. After everyone but the Hawaiians have been sent to the mainland, we are bound to hear someone say, give the country back to the Indians.

This shows just how ridiculous the Big Five propaganda aimed at some of the labor officials is. It's a bit stupid when the Big Five insists that only what they like is Kamaaiana and anything they don't like is Malihini.

We're Americans all. Hawaii, California, New York, Peoria and Kalamazoo—it's all part of America. Let's act that way.

The Big Five might as well know that Malihini-baiting, labor-baiting, red-baiting, and Jew-baiting will not settle this strike. Let them sit down in public negotiations and work out a settlement of the issues in dispute.

ILWU

P. S. *There is another reason why the Big Five should accept our proposition regarding Blaisdell, Steele, Goldblatt and Schmidt. Both Mr. Blaisdell and Mr. Steele have negotiated and signed contracts in San Francisco with this union that include the Union Shop and preference of employment with the same men on the union side.*

P. P. S. We have not mentioned the mainland and "malihini" financial connections of the Big Five with Montgomery St., San Francisco, Wall St., New York, and London, England.

LG: his last name now. Interesting thing, in almost all cases, they drifted away from the union; not drifting away in the sense of changing their feelings particularly.

Freddie, for example, couldn't work on the waterfront after a certain length of time, partly because he had some problems; spent time with his family on the Big Island. Benny Kahamanui all of a sudden up and left and went to work in Los Angeles and spent his last few years there.

Joe Kealaleo was unhappy, unfortunately, even though I was very fond of him and still am; and he was very close to Jack Hall; but had some real falling out with some of the other leadership. Joe Keawe wound up in L. A. So did Sam Manu; Joseph Alapai sort of went the route, a local politician from Maui; I don't think he was around this world too long after that.

One of the things that sort of puzzled me over the years was that these guys were so ardent in their push for unionism. In terms of yeoman service they were unbelievable, like during the days of martial law when they had to get on an island like Lanai to get out the pledge cards and meet with some of the pineapple workers and get going over there. They couldn't get any official transportation; there was one little airport and that was owned by the company.

Ward: How did they get there?

LG: They went over there in fishing sampans. It's not all that far from Maui and they knew the fishermen and talked to a couple of guys and got a lift over there, did their work and came back. They'd hide out at night and they thought nothing of all the difficulties connected with it.

Some of these guys, for example, swam out to these ships that they used to load offshore on the Hamakua coast - I forget the name of the little port there - to talk to some of the workers. These are shark infested waters. So with all this dedication, there was this drift from the union.

Ward: Maybe they liked the excitement and success bored them, is that it?

LG: I don't know if that was it or if it was something deeper going; maybe Freddie said it all; he was getting ready for the king and queen to come back again. Hawaiians felt very keenly that Queen Emma had been a real heroine and stood up courageously against the Big Five, the haoles, the American government.

During the so-called American revolution against the monarchy two guys got shot in the ass and that was it. And the whole thing was motivated primarily because of the determination of the Big Five to avoid paying the sugar tariff. The British were fooling around there at the time, too. It could very well be that the Hawaiians were looking for something else, literally seeing the union as a weapon to remedy all the injustices which have been going on for years, particularly the land seizure.

Ward: You mentioned a while ago the pineapple strike of '47. Is there anything worth talking about there?

LG: Yes, uh, huh.

Ward: Suppose we go into that.

LG: The pineapple strike in '47, in retrospect, is a combination of a couple of things: I don't think our judgment was too sound, and secondly, the employers were determined to launch a counter-attack.

The pineapple workers were not as well organized as the sugar workers. The pineapple industry, crop planting and harvest season, was coordinated with the holiday season of the schools; summer vacation thousands of youngsters, boys and girls, would go down to the pineapple canneries, work as seasonals three months or thereabouts, and pick up the pocket change they needed. The family was poor and they helped get by the following year.

I guess that has become a diminishing thing with the present economy, but in those days that was about the only place they could go to work,

LG: in the canneries. We did not have the same kind of roots among those seasonal workers to compare even with the basic machinery and tight organization we had among the sugar workers. It wasn't because the kids were bad; I think a lot of them didn't understand what the score was. All they could see was that their summer jobs were going out the window.

The employers made a very bold move; supervisors, even the owners - Henry White of Hawaiian Pine - picture of him in the newspaper - out there harvesting pineapple. I guess if he managed one crate for the day, that would be a lot. Families of the Big Five, their cohorts, staffs from the offices, you name it, building a community crusade to save the pineapple industry.

Whether the strike could have kept on I don't know. Jack Hall insisted for years afterwards that in another couple of weeks the employers would have had to meet the demands. One thing was also a mistake, in my opinion. Later on, we began to discuss these things in greater depth. There's no question about it, where a union is faced with an agricultural situation, harvest time becomes a real mote in their eye.

The general feeling is that the employers simply will take a beating. You have a good chance to win if you take them on in that most important season. It's only a half-truth though, because if you could win strikes seasonally, that would be great; all workers would do it wherever they could; but it isn't entirely true, one -

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Ward: There now, you were in the middle of a sentence there.

LG: We were talking about the fascination of seasonality in the case of agriculture. Well, where it turns out to be fallacious is, number one, if the employer decides to pass up a crop then the strike begins to unravel, because it was all predicated on catching him at the peak of the season.

LG: Secondly, where you have that high seasonality, in many cases you are also dependent upon seasonal workers, and you do not have that kind of a grip organizationally with these people that you will with others.

The third aspect of the thing, which always becomes an element in the strike, is whether you are able to pick up support from a broader area than just from the industry itself; sometimes called public support.

In some ways the merits of the beef get lost in the seasonality issue; later on in great discussions around pineapple and sugar, we decided this was a mistake. You could strike just as effectively in the off season in sugar because unless cultivation was done, unless the fields were planted, unless the rotation was maintained, then the damage is even more permanent; the whole crop cycle goes to hell.

Ward: About how many people were employed at the time of the strike in the pineapple industry?

LG: I would say pretty close to 8,000.

Ward: How many people did you have in the union?

LG: I think we had all the year-around workers which is about 5,000, but there were 3,000 seasonal workers.

Ward: And yet you lost the strike?

LG: I'd say we lost it. The guys down there began to call it a lockout, which isn't entirely true because we're the ones who launched the strike. True, the employers had been very arrogant in negotiations and if we'd been a little sharper, perhaps, we would have realized they had decided to take us on.

Anyway, this is all retrospect now. Suffice it to say the strike did not last very long, maybe a couple of weeks at the most; we went back to work pretty much on the employers' terms.

Ward: Were there any gains at all?

LG: Yes, there were some gains made in wages that the employers had offered and a few other things -

Ward: But they had already offered them?

LG: Yes. Are you asking were additional gains made beyond what the employers had offered? No, I don't believe so.

Ward: Was there any union security?

LG: The union security issue had been settled in the case of sugar with the use of maintenance of membership.

Ward: Did you have the same thing, or get it in pineapple?

LG: Yes, I'm pretty sure we got the same thing in pineapple, but the key as far as the employers were concerned was that they would take a strike and fight back. It could be that they had gone into a reappraisal of the sugar thing and figured okay, we've got to tighten ranks and take these guys on before they get any bigger and stronger.

But in the period following the '47 strike, things became more and more difficult in the Islands. There is a sort of a double-take in Hawaii; the whole question of the Cold War, patriotism, and what have you. On the one hand, the treatment of a lot of those workers, particularly during World War II and martial law, I'm sure was a big contributory factor towards the organizational push and the success; people had had it and were bound to move.

On the other hand, the double-take you have is that the same people who'd been kicked around, once they have fought their way back partially, determine to demonstrate an even higher degree of patriotism than anybody else. Then, settling for the 100 percent is not enough - it's 110 proof or better.

LG: So, you had that sort of a picture there. There was no mistaking the atmosphere. There was quite a bit of newspaper attack against the union, almost endless. To the best of our knowledge, one of the agencies I mentioned, C. Brewer, helped finance the so-called revolt. The revolt was led by the man who at that time, was either Island Director or a member of the staff on the Big Island, a man by the name of Amos Ignacio. He got a few people to support him, too.

Ward: What was he saying? Leave the union? Or was he setting up an opposition union?

LG: Oh, no - no. He would have a union of Hawaiians for Hawaiians, the usual business: you didn't need these mainlanders - kolea birds, they would call us. Kolea bird is a plover and I gather that one of the distinctions of plovers is that they use another bird's nest. They didn't need any of these kolea birds. And that combined with a great deal of redbaiting; the usual thing.

As best as Jack and others could figure out, this sure was having some impact, particularly all the redbaiting. In an atmosphere like that the teachers, for example, or your local merchants all have their impact. These had been pretty much friends of ours in '46, but this patriotic pull, this newspaper pull, got greater and greater.

Showdown!

LG: The net result was that towards the tail end of '47, we decided the only thing to do was to call the thing to a showdown right then and there and decide where the devil we were going. So, we called an emergency convention of the ILWU in Hilo.

Ward: That was of the Hawaii locals?

LG: Yes, all the units or locals that we had in Hawaii, the biggest group being the sugar workers. True, we had taken a bumping in the '47 strike and this

LG: followed very closely on its heels. We had this convention in 1948 and it was really a very dramatic convention -

Ward: This was in Hilo?

LG: In Hilo at the armory. I'll admit we did a bit of staging for the convention, too. I'd been over there a few days before. We decided to try to find Ignacio and invite him and whatever dissidents there were to the convention; we had hunting parties out all over the place looking for him. I guess he decided he didn't want this kind of a showdown or would just rely on the support of the employers and the newspapers. So, this helped build up the drama for the convention.

There's an amusing sidelight to this. Just before the convention took place, for the first time Life magazine decided to do a story on the Big Five. I think it was the first time that pictures of the Big Five were printed in an American national magazine and the two men they had down there were Eliot Elisofon, a very distinguished photographer, and Martin O'Neill, a writer.

I found out later that O'Neill followed the story all the way back to New York City to talk to Henry Luce to make sure it wasn't changed. They had gotten in touch with me. I must have been down there around the holiday season; I did a lot of commuting at that time; they wanted to know whether some of our guys would talk to them about the union down there.

Oh, by that time, we had wind of the fact that they were being pretty well taken care of by the Big Five. So, when they came by I said, "Well, I'm not sure you want to talk to our people. You've been riding around in the car supplied by the Big Five; you've been wined and dined by them; you have a special rate at whatever hotel you're staying at - the Royal Hawaiian or the Moana."

They still insisted and I said, "I'm not sure it will do a hell of a lot of good." I criticized their "objective" reporting - I left it on that

LG: level - and I said, "I don't think you're reporters at all." The more I did that, the more determined they became. I said, "Look, I'll do one thing for you - nothing more. I'll give you a letter which will give you access to every union meeting we have; walk in there and sit and listen. If the guys want to talk to you afterwards, fine; if they don't, well, too bad.

"But go out in the fields for a change instead of spending all your time here in Honolulu. We'll give you a list of where the various units are meeting, the plantations are meeting, and so forth. Right now we have a bit of a problem - we'll be meeting over in Hilo. If you feel like coming by there, you're welcome."

We threw the whole thing open to the newspapers and everything else. Apparently they realized there was a lot more to it than the story they were getting about lovely Hawaii and the beautiful situation in which the people lived. I think I showed you that picture in Life magazine - or did I?

Ward: Don't remember.

LG: Well, as I told you Martin O'Neill chased that story all the way back to New York and that's the first time I think we had any decent coverage during that whole period in something like Life. There's an odd sequel to this I'd like to mention to you. (Goldblatt shows picture from Life magazine of him speaking to a group of workers under a banyan tree, and other relevant pictures.) Elisofon is an excellent photographer.

Ward: Oh, here's a picture of Harry. Is this the first time he entered the picture down there?

LG: Not particularly during the sugar strike. I recall being on the phone with him.

Ward: You didn't mention him at all during your account of the sugar strike.

LG: I don't think he spent any time down there at all. If he did, he only made one brief trip. I recall at the end of the sugar strike telling him where things stood and he said, "Well, it looks like we've got it won, and you might as well squeeze the hell out of it." He was down there during the pineapple strike - no question about that.

(Another interlude, looking at more Life pictures.)

Ward: Good coverage and interesting photographs.

LG: You know, I lost my copy of the magazine and about a year and a half ago, I get a call from this guy, Martin O'Neill. He says, "You remember me?" And I say, "Sure." "Well, my son has been trying to get into the school for marine engineers and they just keep putting him off. I don't know how the selections are made. Is there anything you can do for him?"

I said, "Sure, I'll make a phone call. Does he really want to be a seaman? Does he really want to go to sea? The difficulty is these days that guys just want to make a trip and call it a day." "No," he said, "he'd just as soon make this his life's work; he likes engines, and I think he'd make a good engineer. It would take him a while to find himself, but I don't think he'd let you down at all."

I said, "Fine, that's all I'm interested in, really, because some of these kids go in there through nepotism, take a trip and they're all done." So, I made a couple of phone calls and sure enough he got admitted and O'Neill called me back and said, "I'd like to do something for you." "Sure, you find me a copy of that issue of Life magazine." Because it was out of print, you see. And sure enough, it turned up here.

Anyway, he's down in L. A. somewhere now, doing some writing. He's no longer with Life. Anyway, one of the by-products was this story, although -

Ward: Oh, yes - now the convention -

LG: Later on we couldn't get rid of Elisofon. He fell in love with one of the girls in the office, so he was around there all the time and chasing her evenings. Of course, she knew the whole score, particularly the background of what they had done in taking all these little perquisites, so she wasn't giving him too much time.

At the convention itself, we took a very direct position, namely, that we go into all the issues anybody would raise, including all the ones raised by the newspapers, including all the redbaiting and everything else and all the accusations about us being left-wingers.

The International would not be satisfied with anything but a referendum vote of the entire membership. Now whether the whole membership voted, or just sugar, I'm not sure. It might have been just sugar. There were some guys there who were somewhat difficult at the convention - a guy by the name of Hideo Hisaoka - but in a fairly constructive way. At least he wasn't anti-union -

Ward: They were bitten by the union for Hawaiians?

LG: That together with all the redbaiting, the Cold War and the whole she-bang. Our policy was the unity of the workers in Hawaii. I said, "That is the only chance you have with the Big Five; otherwise, you are dead ducks and you might as well go back to where you were before the strike and the union ever began."

The unity of the workers in Hawaii was the nub of it all. A fragmented organization would mean absolutely nothing to us. Our position was if for example the vote was something like 40 percent or 49 percent to stay in the ILWU and 51 percent to leave it, we would instruct the 49 percent to join the 51 percent. Maintain their unity; and that we wanted every issue hammered out right in the open. It was quite a lively convention, let me tell you, for about two or three days.

Ward: You said you did some little staging?

LG: The staging was mostly to try to get Ignacio there; he never turned up.

Ward: So, you had the empty chair for him?

LG: Practically, yes. Of course, his stock really plummeted during the convention together with a couple of his cohorts, one of whom later became a sort of half-assed supervisor or luna. Beyond that he hadn't been able to pick up any support. At that point it was a turning point and Ignacio began to go downhill very quickly.

I've made a lot of speeches in my life, obviously, because you do that in this sort of work. But I guess the best one I ever made on the subject of redbaiting was at that convention with an attempt at a real analysis of what it is all about and how it's done and why it is done, and where you wind up if you start off in that direction.

The wolf pack is not satisfied with your just turning non-communist, they want you to be anti-communist; and being anti-communist isn't enough, you have to prove it, you see. Pretty soon they give you the list of the victims whose heads you have to bring in. You never quite satisfy them.

Well, I really covered that one and luckily there is a transcript of that convention somewhere around in the ILWU library in Hawaii. I think Jeff Kibre looked it over once when he was down there and used it a good deal afterwards. And a thing I had done some years before turned out to be a windfall.

Ward: Which was what?

LG: I had testified against the evacuation of the Japanese in 1942 and when the war was over, Dillon S. Myer, who had been the War Relocation Administrator, had sent me a letter, completely unsolicited, to the effect that my testimony stood out like a beacon light, or something like that.

As a matter of fact, this was the same testimony that Allan Bosworth later wrote up in his book, American Concentration Camps. So I recalled the letter and took it along with me, and at the right moment at the convention, I read off this letter. I had only one question which I'll admit I hammered home pretty hard.

LG: I said, "Okay now, you guys have been here in Hawaii, most of you right through the war period in the 442nd, the army. Just wait for a minute; if you don't want to raise it now, any time you can think of it, take the floor. Who are these people in the Big Five, who are these people in the newspapers like the (Honolulu) Advertiser and the Star Bulletin who are carrying on this vicious campaign against us?

"Any of these editors, any of these feature writers, anybody you can think of among the Big Five, did any of them take a position as friends of the local people when you were having the hell kicked out of you, when you were put in concentration camps, families broken up and so forth, people barred from certain employment in Hawaii, maids frozen in their jobs for $25 a month or less, or in a laundry so the colonel could get a shirt sometime? You just name one person.

"All you gotta do is think back and make a decision for yourself: are these new-found friends better than the old ones?"

I'm sure it had its impact. A good part of the membership in attendance were Japanese. The Japanese were very active in the organization, and because they had a few advantages in terms of schooling, keeping records, they automatically took over important functions in all the plantation levels.

So this testimony I had given years before finally came back in rather pleasant form; it is not very often that those things happen. The net result was that some of the guys at the tail end of the convention were saying, "Oh, the hell with the vote - we don't need it, we've heard from all the plantations, nobody is going to go along with this crap. We're staying in the ILWU, there's no need for a vote."

We said, "No, that's it, a vote will be taken." So, it was put to a referendum. The vote to stay in the ILWU was somewhere around 98 percent; that's the reason for the comment there that the so-called revolt came to nothing. As a matter of fact, we emerged from the whole thing -

Ward: Much stronger?

LG: Oh, yes stronger, a bit stronger because the counter-attack had been blunted. It had not been ended, I can assure you; from there on we had a rough time in sugar negotiations because of -

Ward: This will be in '48?

LG: In '48, right, because of the falling off of prices on sugar. Again the same outfit - C. Brewer - took a lead for a special differential in some of the so-called distressed plantations which we had to work out - a sort of a separate wage line. Eventually all of it was washed out and we were back on the industry line.

We had to do a lot of backing and filling. It was not easy. In the case of Olaa - that's a plantation on the Big Island, an American Factors plantation - there was a very difficult manager. They also had a problem mechanizing. Bear in mind that the mechanization of agriculture in Hawaii was uneven.

In some places such as Oahu, on the island of Maui, Kauai, the mechanization equipment, particularly for the harvesting of cane, the machine was a blessing, I thought. There is nothing socially uplifting in hand-cutting cane; it's dirty, miserable and an impossible job; guys had to be tough for that. A big majority were Filipinos.

There was a combination of hourly wage and piece work system, but when it came to the Big Island, that is where the mechanization came last, in part because these were different kinds of fields; they were not quite as flat; a lot of them were on pali land, you know, up the hill.

Secondly, the soil was quite rocky. You had a great deal of rain on the Hamakua coast and the question of getting these harvesting machines, together with other equipment that you need to go into those fields and work in wet ground, was not easily solved.

LG: Once the cane is cut they use cranes to pick it up and load it into very large trucks, and the roads were not equipped to take it.

The mechanization was just not the business of getting the machine. It was also the question of what kind was adapted to the work and whether there was adequate road construction through the plantations so that you could make the change-over. On that score, the Big Island, Hawaii, lagged somewhat behind the others.

This, I'm sure, was one of the reasons why they invited a strike in '48, at least on those plantations. This, we felt, would not be wise. We wanted to keep industry-wide bargaining, and after very detailed and elaborate negotiations, including a lot of sessions over in Hilo, we did finally work out an agreement which as I said resulted in, oh, a sort of a certain amount of backing up on the Hamakua coast plantations, but kept the industry together.

The one plantation that broke and went on its own was the management at Olaa; an American Factors plantation with a very difficult manager, a man by the name of Williams. The company simply posted a major cut in wages, with the announcement that if you wanted to work, these were the conditions.

Now, that was a lockout - a flat, out-and-out lockout, and a very rough beef ensued. The guys walked out and they had a problem in addition to the others on the Hamakua coast. Olaa is not on the Hamakua coast. It's a little drier area, up towards the mountains. Mountain View, it is called. And that is where the town of Olaa is - now it is called the Puna plantation.

There they had a big problem, of mechanizing the rocky soil, all boulders and volcanic rock; they were having trouble. You practically planted cane between the rocks. They finally made it all right, but this was just a flat lockout. I believe the guys were -

Ward: Was this the only place where there was a work stoppage, lockout or strike?

LG: Right. And naturally we supported the strike. Luckily, it was one of the good, solid units of sugar; one of the first to organize, by the way. And they had taken over the one small plantation where Art Rutledge was screwing around, Waiakea.

After at least two or three months, we finally had to resolve that. We couldn't get rid of the entire wage cut; we got rid of about half of it, and then we got rid of the rest of it later on.

I recall that the Olaa agreement was made prior to our expulsion from the CIO because at one executive board meeting when Harry was back in Washington, Phil Murray had picked up the word of what had happened in Hawaii.

If understanding unions doesn't also mean understanding when to take on a beef and when to back up a bit, then you haven't learned a hell of a lot.

Anybody can go down with the flags flying; doesn't take a lot to do that. All you'll have there is demonstrations of courage - whether actually courage, I don't know, because sometimes it's much harder to retreat. But Phil Murray decided to take on Harry, I guess, just because things were getting ugly; he went into a long discussion of "How do you negotiate a wage cut?"

And when Murray got cranked up on something like that, his sarcasm just floored you. How do you negotiate a wage cut? Do you demand more of a wage cut and settle for less of a wage cut? As though the Steelworkers had been organized for a hundred years; never had a goddam problem in their life, you see. And Phil Murray gave Harry a lecture on lockouts and wage cuts.

Ward: Did Harry reply? You weren't there?

LG: No, I wasn't there. I think Harry simply told him, "Look, we have our own union and we run our own affairs; if we think it's right, that's all there is to it." I know it didn't phase us one goddam hair in Hawaii or back in San Francisco headquarters.

LG: But all this, of course, was sort of shaping up towards the '48 longshore strike. Taft-Hartley had been passed. There was a big clash in the CIO on compliance or non-compliance. The left-wing unions decided not to comply, although gradually one at a time, they folded and finally the last two that were left were the UE and the ILWU. Around 1949, we decided there was really no choice but to comply because Taft-Hartley was being used to raid us constantly. Without compliance, we would be in serious trouble.

Well, that was the atmosphere in Hawaii. The employers were not letting up. They had taken a real kick in the ass on the Ignacio thing, but still they were united on taking on the union, which came to a head in the 1949 longshore strike in Hawaii. They were probably divided on how it's done; it resulted in a very peculiar situation in the Hawaiian Employers Council, even though I only got these things indirectly.

The Big Five, number one, couldn't make a mistake; so, if a mistake was made it had to be someone from the Employers Council, somebody they hired. They were going in different directions and did not have a unified policy, and the net result was that some of the conflicts and contradictions among the employers did not hurt us entirely. The question was when would they finally pull their ranks together, which they did in 1949 in the big longshore strike.

That was a showdown; were we prepared to take them on? Guys like Blaisdell, and later Steele who came down there to work with him, I don't think ever got the kind of authority or the power to give direction and keep it, because of this constant second guessing and the fact that the Big Five could not make a mistake. I think that made a big difference; I can understand why it drove both of them to drink; I don't know what else you would do.

As a matter of fact, during that whole period when they were demanding a separate wage line, it wasn't confined to the Hamakua coast. There were other plantations, like Pioneer Mill, although

LG: there again obviously their approach to the thing must have been pretty disparate and not organized. We set up a fact-finding committee, made up of Teddy Kreps, who was working in our research department at the time, and a couple of other people. They would go around to the plantations. We had an hilarious experience over at Pioneer. I told you about this interesting character, Jack Moier, and his cleaning out the rocks. Well, we met him and went over his books; I gave him the example of the guy with a million dollar inventory. He says he's broke - he owes a million dollars, absolutely true until he opens up the store.

He had to agree with that, at which point the whole thing turned into a tirade by him against the factor - the agency - because they did not have confidence in him. These are the sort of things which were happening. He later turned out to be quite a friend of the union. As a matter of fact, I remember the going-away dinner they had for Harry and myself in Honolulu. He turned up.

XII THE "NEW LOOK"

Employers Turn The Other Cheek

Ward: Now, you seem to be moving toward the '48 longshore strike on the coast, but you were pretty well engrossed in Hawaii. Did you play any role in the longshore strike? On the coast?

LG: Oh, yes. I was back here for that.

Ward: Do you want to talk about that now?

LG: Yes. I'm trying to remember the exact date when the longshore strike began - it actually began September 3rd.

Ward: June 15th was the date you mentioned -

LG: June 15th, right - that was the expiration date. But before it began there was an interesting interlude. The employers decided to make a first test of the Taft-Hartley Act by imposing an 80-day cooling- off period, a postponement of the strike. At the end of the 80 days, there was a fact-finding hearing, following which the employers made a "final offer" on which the longshoremen were supposed to vote. If they voted against the final offer, then and then only could they go on strike. Taft-Hartley said so.

Well, the way the longshoremen handled the 80-day injunction and the vote on the final offer is one for the book. I'll tell you about it in detail later. One thing became certain: never again has there been any vote on any "final offer", no matter what Taft-Hartley says.

LG: So, the longshore strike was a major drive by the Waterfront Employers Association led by Frank P. Foisie, "Fink Hall Foisie," and Gregory Harrison, their attorney.

Harrison was the attorney who represented the American President Lines in their suit against the government on the question of whether or not the government had adequately compensated the owners. He finally got an enormous judgment of somewhere around $17 or $18,000,000 in which he picked up one of the biggest fees ever paid in this country.

And, god, he was an arrogant man. I'll never forget some of the remarks he'd make. We were in negotiations and I was a member of the committee and the biggest demand on the part of the employers was that in keeping with Taft-Hartley there be compliance; that the employers had the right to select dispatchers, or equal right to select the dispatchers.

Dispatchers in longshore are still elected by the union, even though they are joint employees. So, it was really a push to control the hiring hall. Lot of it, of course, was the usual publicity of which they had an endless amount, which they had elaborated on for years. Stoppages of work and violations of the contract, and so on.

It was pretty evident that the employers were determined to see this thing through. It was sort of Foisie's last hurrah. Harrison did a lot of talking in negotiations, as well as Foisie.

I recall just a couple of issues that came along. For example, we were discussing salvage work, salvage pay. True, that most salvage work goes out to a salvage contractor. In other words, he buys all the cargo on the vessel. If a vessel gets hung up on the rocks, or something like that, and they can't re-float it, in many cases the longshore local has to negotiate with this man for the rate the men will be paid to unload the cargo, because it is risky work.

There was an attempt to get it in the contract and the attitude by Harrison was very quick on the thing. He says, "Look, we don't fiddle around with

LG: salvage; it's done by certain people of a certain nationality who always pick these things up." Just a flat, anti-Semitic crack, you know.

Another time we were discussing vacations which we picked up in the contract during the war for the first time; vacations with pay for longshoremen. We were talking about a longshoreman who was entitled to a vacation and he dies; does the estate get the money or doesn't it?

To us, it was the simplest issue under the sun; the guy has earned it, has it coming, and you give it to his widow. We had no pensions, widows' benefits; I don't think we even had life insurance. Harrison or Foisie made the crack, "He doesn't need any vacation pay - he's on permanent vacation."

These things cropped up during negotiations. I was convinced that unless the union was prepared to roll over and play dead, there just wasn't much choice on a battle.

Ward: The Employers Association was forcing a strike?

LG: It was the Waterfront Employers Association; it is really the key element in the San Francisco Employers Council, the California Employers Council. That was when George Bahrs was with the San Francisco Employers Council and Almon Roth ---

Ward: I was going to ask where Roth came in.

LG: That's right. I'll tell you about it in a little while. Anyway, I got in touch with Randolph Sevier; I'd met him in Hawaii. I had been in the Islands just before the longshore negotiations and I think I was invited over to Steele's house.

Randolph Sevier was a tough egg. I also felt, however, he was a man you could talk to and I said, "Look, I thought the negotiations, from all I could figure out, were practically on the rocks and that -

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Ward: Now, your talk with Mr. Sevier?

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LG: Right, he was about to become the new head of Matson. Sevier's background was that he had started off as a purser for the Matson ships and just by dint of hard work and being a pretty tough egg had moved up in the chain of command.

Later on in 1949, of course, he got bitter about things; the longshore strike in Hawaii, because that's where Matson really got it in a terrific beef. But my feeling was that he was not looking for a beef in 1948.

He might have already smelled out the fact that people like Foisie and Harrison were on an anti-union crusade, and partially venting their own personal feelings that had accumulated since 1934. It turned out to be that way. But all he said when I was about to leave was "Well, I'd like to be kept posted on this, anyway."

Anyway, the strike broke. The men were prepared; the one thing they didn't want to see was the employers taking over the union and nullifying the hiring hall. That was the crux of the whole strike. I'm sure that Sevier must have been responsible for the presence of Cushing -

Ward: O.K. Cushing?

LG: Whether it was O.K. Cushing or his son, I'm not sure. O.K. was one of those who was a signatory to the 1934 arbitration award.

Ward: Well, he was a member of the three man commission - it was Cushing, Archbishop Hanna and McGrady. You think it was the same man, O. K. Cushing?

LG: It could be the same man. Not a young guy. Anyway, he suddenly appeared in the negotiations sitting right behind Foisie; just sitting there and looking down their necks. After all, these are the guys who had their money in the industry; Foisie didn't. Harrison was a lawyer. The real bosses decided they ought to get into the thing themselves.

LG: Later on I told Sevier, "Sometimes strikes happen in funny ways. I was at those negotiations when we broke off. The day before that Cushing made the statement that he had an annual date to go dove hunting with his son, and he wasn't going to break the date. Well, he probably went out to take a piss and by the time he got back, the strike was on." Harrison and Foisie were just determined to bring the damn thing to a head, somehow. And they did.

Ugly set of negotiations. But I was in touch with Sevier, almost at once. I tried to reach him in Hawaii the day before the strike began. He had just taken the Lurline; he was on board ship, he and his wife and a lot of his personal goods; they were on their way to San Francisco. So, here there was a hiatus for four or five days until he arrived in San Francisco.

I was in touch with him as soon as he arrived and set up a meeting to discuss things, because we weren't looking for a beef, really. I kept Harry informed of all these conversations. There was no way of ducking it that the employers were determined to have a complete showdown.

The first engagement we had didn't materialize because I thought we were due to meet at the Sir Francis Drake - and he turned up at the St. Francis. I guess he had never heard of the Sir Francis Drake. I got hold of him later that afternoon and asked him what happened and he said he went to the St. Francis Hotel.

Okay, then we met the next day. I went over some of the stuff, just pounding the same simple line that there was nothing outrageous in our demands; nothing difficult; the nub of the question was that the employers were embarked on a campaign, using Taft-Hartley and the anti-labor atmosphere in the country to do a job on the ILWU.

I had a feeling he didn't have too much stomach for it. I told him about Cushing and that he was there because of Sevier and Sevier didn't say "yes" or "no", but I'm sure he was. He didn't say why Cushing was there.

LG: I guess that's an internal problem. But I had the feeling that they too had become a bit suspicious about the way the thing was going. What developed pretty quickly in the course of that strike was that this was a union-breaking program of really monstrous proportions, tied in with the CIO.

One of the first things we did was to announce that if one of the reasons negotiations had foundered was because the employers didn't want to meet with officials who had not signed the Taft-Hartley affidavits, the committee would resign and get a committee of rank and filers prepared to meet at once.

Of course the employers wouldn't take us up on that because any committee of rank and filers who would go in there were bound to be twice as tough. Where their program finally manifested itself was in various hints that because of the endless violations of the contract, according to the employers, they needed a third party to act as guarantor of the contract. The third party would be the CIO.

In other words, the contract would be entered into between the Waterfront Employers and the CIO, with the ILWU as just agents. Agents, of course, could be removed. We weren't having any part of that, so there started a whole series of roundy-go-roundy. Alan Heywood was in on the thing; I was sort of assigned to the job of spending time with Alan Heywood and trying to be as friendly as we could without doing anything.

Ward: Did you say Alan Heywood was representing the CIO?

LG: The CIO, he was the organizational director in charge of CIO - a short, stocky coal miner, and a rather humorous guy, in some ways a lot of fun; while I got along with him, it was pretty obvious he was a machine man. Well, later on I made Alan Heywood pay some of his dues. When we finally got into negotiations toward the tail end, we had Alan Heywood sitting in.

Harry was there, maybe somebody from the coast committee. I suggested that we should give Alan Heywood something to handle in these negotiations -

LG: it would be a good idea. We went through the demands and found one that was absolutely hopeless and that we intended to drop. So, I talked to Alan Heywood and said, "Why don't you give this a whirl?" I will say that in negotiations he gave it a real charge, and the employers were just looking out the window. End of the line.

Anyway, that was the manoeuvering going on at the top and that's where Almon Roth got in the picture. The strike must have been around 45 days old, and I got a call from George Bahrs. He was in charge of the San Francisco Employers Council, their full time staff person, ex-football player or rower from the University of California; a big man. I didn't feel he was looking for any fight; a job's a job and he was an office holder.

He wanted to talk to me so I dropped by. He said, "Almon Roth would like to see you." Bear in mind, you keep everybody informed of these things, so there can't be any doublecross. Well, Roth didn't want to meet in an office; maybe he was suspicious of wire tapping.

I was prepared to meet down at their office or have a drink some place. It didn't work out that way. No, he'd pick me up in his car. Maybe he had a recording machine there, I don't know; it really doesn't make enough difference. People think there's something in these things and there almost never is.

We went out and parked near USF (University of San Francisco), sat and talked for an hour and a half. He was going round and round on trying to work out a settlement. Most of it sounded fairly good; at least it was a negotiating posture until he came to the real nub of the situation - this business of having the CIO as the guarantor of the contract.

Ward: Oh, it really was at that point?

LG: Oh, yes; as a matter of fact he gave me a document - it might be in our files somewhere. I told him the last part wouldn't sit with our guys;

LG: the employers were really trying to wreck our union, they might get a full meal and all we'll get is a ham sandwich, but it's one of these fights we can't avoid.

He didn't try to apologize for the handling of the thing by the waterfront employers; obviously they were going the whole string on this attempt. As a matter of fact there were a couple of other manoeuvres going on too, some of which we found out about later; the meeting between Lundeberg and Dave Beck, Lundeberg saying he could man the ships, put crews on board, which I doubted; and I'm not sure that Beck could have delivered.

He tried in '37 and it didn't pan out. The employers were prepared to go in there for a major crusade to save America and break the ILWU. They were doing their patriotic duty, and the few little personal things they had in there, of course, had nothing to do with it.

So, there was a lot of crap going on. There were meetings constantly at the Apostleship of the Sea, where they were trying to put together this Association of Catholic Trade Unions. Father Rice was very active in that thing at the time -

Ward: Father Rice?

LG: Father Rice, from the South - Louisiana - putting out pamphlets on how you stack a union meeting, all built around this redbaiting campaign. Anyway, towards the tail end of the strike, it was clear that the union ranks would hold; we were beginning to pick up some support. I think even Paul Smith realized that.

Ward: How many days out was it when you talk about the tail end of the strike? How long had the thing been going on?

LG: The strike lasted a little over 90 days or 87 days - this must have been -

Ward: Around the 80th day or something like that?

LG: Somewhere in the back of my mind there's a recollection that the strike started on Labor Day and the negotiations got under way on Armistice Day and finished on Thanksgiving Day. That would be about 67 days or thereabouts.

Well, who turns up in San Francisco - and it was obvious that somebody like Sevier had gotten his oar in the thing, because Matson was still the biggest shipper off the west coast - but Jim Blaisdell and Dwight Steele from Hawaii. Then we were really going roundy-go-roundy because Jim didn't believe in talking negotiations except in a bar.

The Happy Valley in the Palace Hotel sort of became my semi-official headquarters for some days. But, gradually, the thing began to fall in place. Steele was the one who began to do most of the talking for the employers.

Ward: Foisie?

LG: Foisie and Harrison were shunted aside. So, we moved toward settlement and the strike wound up in good shape. Kept everything we had and picked up a few gains; the most important was that the whole union was maintained. Their whole Taft-Hartley push went down the drain. When the strike was over, shortly thereafter, that ended the Waterfront Employers; they set up the Pacific Maritime Association.

Ward: I'm a little bit curious here. Harry wasn't in the negotiations - in these informal negotiations in the Happy Valley?

LG: No -

Ward: So, how did you - ?

LG: Oh, easy, just go back and tell him exactly -

Ward: Yes, I know. But did you come to some conclusions and then recommend them to Harry?

LG: We didn't go into too many details; a lot of them were hammered out over the table. It was perfectly clear they wanted a settlement. In negotiations

LG: you are prepared to make the employer look like the second coming of Christ if you get what you want. Sure, as we put it in Hawaii one time, if they want to save face and lose their ass that's great.

So, on some of these things it was just a matter of Steele knowing where we were going, what the latitude was. After checking with Harry and others you got an idea what range so that they could move in a certain direction. And on a couple of things he was anxious that they not look too bad, that's all. We sat down and it might have been the issue that we gave to Alan Haywood. It blew, that's all. So, part of it was just shibai as they call it - a charade.

Anyway, the thing fell in place and shortly thereafter the Pacific Maritime Association was set up. A new man, determined to try to get along with the unions, and a good man, Vic Pearson, became the head of the PMA and we got to do a lot of dealing with him.

When we launched the first pension plan several years later in longshore, I thought he took by far the most constructive role I'd seen any employer take for years. He was not a union buster, no.

As a matter of fact, the whole crew that moved in there were a different group of guys. They were operators and were not embarked on any individual crusades; managerial people in the main, who knew the name of the game is to make a buck and not to break the unions. Guys like Vic Pearson who became the key man there; unfortunately he died several years later, 1954 - '55.

Ward: You mentioned in passing?

LG: Ken Finessy was there, Mait Pennington was there, Hubert Brown; there were a number of guys who were pretty good.

Ward: You mentioned as doing something - Paul Smith of the Chronicle.

LG: Yes, Paul Smith, I think -

Ward: Paul Smith had been helpful with Warehouse years before.

LG: Right. And I think he finally got the drift of what was going on with Foisie and Harrison and realized that this was just an out-and-out attempt to destroy the union. Paul Smith was no great supporter of unions, but there's a big difference between that and being an all-out union buster. He was no Colonel (Henry R.) Sanborn or one of these people like Harper Knowles - what was the name of that famous red-baiter?

Ward: Colonel Sanborn was in Portland and Harper Knowles was with the Associated Farmers -

LG: Colonel Sanborn was the one who used to print those nutty papers in the thirties. I told you that story about Colonel Sanborn printing big editorials about the leftwing marching on Salinas.

Well, Paul Smith wasn't anything like that; much more coolheaded. We met with both him and (George T.) Cameron, the publisher (of the San Francisco Chronicle). These were cordial sessions and they were not unfriendly to what we were trying to do. I think they themselves had decided that the thing had run its course.

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(Interview 19: 25 July, 1978)

Kindness To Union Men

Ward: We were winding up the 1948 longshore strike, we had gotten rid of Foisie, Harrison and all that. That's where we left off, I believe.

LG: Right.

Ward: Okay. Now, what's next?

LG: I think I mentioned that there was what they called a "new look on the waterfront" and the man who became the head of the PMA was Vic Pearson.

Ward: Yes, you mentioned him before.

LG: Pearson was determined to try to get along with the unions, a good man - he wouldn't just embark on a holy crusade for our extermination. Then there were a number of people who worked with him and whose general attitude was in the same direction, guys like Hubert Brown of the Pacific Far East Line; Ken Finessy, I believe he was with the States Line, Mait Pennington - he was with the line that Paul Fagan had for a while.

I later got to know Paul Fagan quite well. He was the man who owned the San Francisco Seals (a baseball club) and was married to an Irvine, this woman who owned half of the island of Molokai; they also owned Hana Maui. We'll get into that later.

Ward: Oh, that's right, Fagan did come from the Islands, didn't he?

LG: I'm not sure he came from the Islands, but he married into an Island family. And I don't recall if I got to know him during the '48 strike or a little later on in 1949. The important point is that the employers themselves called it the "new look" and obviously they made a policy decision that they were going to make an effort to try to get along and that the running battle that had gone on from 1933 - '34 all the way through the 1948 strike was a closed chapter.

Ward: Am I correct in my impression that since then there has not been a longshore strike of any consequence on the west coast?

LG: That's not true; there was a major strike at the end of the 1971 contract, a strike that lasted about four months.

Ward: Oh, oh - I wasn't in the country then.

LG: That could explain it. It is true that we went for a long period of time without any strike, by and large negotiating most of our contracts across the table during this period when things were initiated such as the health and welfare program, the pension program later on, and a number of other major benefits to the contract.

It was during this latter period of time when the whole mechanization program was launched. But that was after Vic Pearson had died and Paul St. Sure took over - an entirely different era.

Ward: Oh, yes. When did Paul St. Sure come into the picture?

LG: I'd say, somewhere around the middle or late fifties -

Ward: I might make this comment. Paul St. Sure was one of the lecturers at the California Labor School during the later days of the war, so he was evidently trying to make friends with the labor movement at that time.

LG: It could be. He was also something of a maverick. I'll admit that my early encounters with him were not all that pleasant.

Ward: Neither were mine.

LG: Paul St. Sure had been the attorney for the Santa Cruz Packing Company where we had a strike in the thirties. The employers there resorted to every known device to break the union; oh, they had a whole series of unfair labor practices.

The strike was lost and I recall during that strike having some extremely harsh words with him. I was mixed up in it in one way or another. As a matter of fact, at one time apparently he decided that some of my statements were threats. I guess they were; I decided I'd get even some way.

LG: Oddly enough, that case finally went to the Supreme Court and they upheld the National Labor Relations Board in all their charges against the company. A number of the strikers who had been heaved out of their jobs were entitled to substantial back pay, and so forth. This was many years later. You know, these cases drag on anywhere from four to six years.

Ward: Well, let me put the question another way. How long did Vic Pearson last? As head of the PMA?

LG: Until the time that Paul St. Sure took over - and that must have been from about 1948 until 1953, somewhere in there.

Family Interlude

Ward: Okay. Now, this would be a good time to switch the subject entirely. After all, by this time you had three little girls running around the house, didn't you?

LG: Yes. Sure.

Ward: And you weren't home a hell of a lot either, were you?

LG: Well, luckily by that time - we had moved back to San Francisco, you know, in 1943 or '44 or thereabouts.

Ward: Moved back from where?

LG: From the east. You remember Terry and I had been in Chicago for a while, then in the east working on a war shipping report -

Ward: And the first child was born before you went east, I believe.

LG: Yes, born in San Francisco in 1941 and Lee, then, was born a couple of years later when we returned to San Francisco. Then, Liza was born two years later. So, we had a growing family, a lot of fun.

LG: We'd purchased this house in San Francisco, the one on Ashbury Terrace. As a matter of fact, George Andersen helped find the place for me, negotiate the purchase. It was right around the corner from where he lived - he and Frances and their family.

Ward: I remember the place - the locality.

LG: It was a peculiar neighborhood in some ways. Ashbury Terrace itself was almost like an enclave. I think they had some sort of a deal with the city because they paved that street once a year, whether it needed it or not.

Almost all of my neighbors were Catholics, and of course our kids went to public school. They didn't go to kindergarten; they went to Twin Peaks school when they were old enough; that was a tiny little school. I think it was during the period when there weren't so many kids around. A lot of guys in the army, and so forth.

Anyway, it was sort of like a country school house. It had one teacher teaching three or four classes; a very comfortable place, although the kids would come along once in a while with interesting stories. Many of the kids in the neighborhood went to parochial school which was not too far away, Ashbury and Clayton (Streets).

One day they were telling me that they were talking to some of the other kids in the street. They got along all right, the kids were telling them they were all Catholics and what was she? And Lee's reply was, "We're not Catholics - we're publics."

At one time Bill Plunkert and Frances lived right on the corner of Ashbury Terrace and Piedmont. They had a very lovely house there. It was bought later by Dan Flanagan -

Ward: Oh! your old enemy?

LG: That's right, the man who was very close to the Teamsters at the time of our organizational push in warehouse and later was part of the police

LG: force. We went through some rather difficult days; he was later expelled from office; went to work as a representative of the AFL; he moved into the area.

Before long our kids, who were pretty gregarious, were playing with his kids. I think that was the determining factor as to why he moved out! Although I saw him on the street once in a while, there was never more than a nod; no conversation.

Ward: Would you identify Bill Plunkert for the record?

LG: Oh, Bill Plunkert was an old, old friend and really quite an amazing guy. He had been connected with the State Relief Administration in California at one time, during the Olson days.

Ward: He was nominated by the ILWU (to be director of the SRA); we asked Olson to appoint him and he refused. Plunkert was an assistant to Dewey Anderson.

LG: Right. Bill had at one time worked with Harry Hopkins (right-hand man to FDR) and he was a bright guy. Bill had a few problems. I remember when he had a running battle with John Barleycorn, but at least he held his own most of the time.

We were close friends. As a matter of fact, there was a circle of friends, including Leigh Athearn, Bill and Frances Plunkert, Ralph and Ernestine Wertheimer; they were a part of this whole group. Then there were the Farrs. Do you remember the Mel Farrs?

Ward: No.

LG: He later became either a State Assemblyman or State Senator from Monterey - they moved down there. Very pleasant people. We knew him at first when he lived on Jones Street around the corner from Anita Whitney. At that time, Terry and I were living somewhere on Telegraph Hill or later on out on Green Street and we used to see them there a good deal, most every week. Later

LG: on the Plunkerts moved out to Ashbury Terrace and still later on to a small street not too far from the Fairmont Hotel.

Ward: The Plunkerts had a very interesting house on that street you're mentioning. I remember the living room was two stories high; very unusual house for San Francisco.

LG: A very lovely house, too. Bill's background had been primarily social work, although he went to work in warehouse for a while. He worked at Western Sugar and was a member of the union. Frances was a very good statistician. When they moved east, I think she went to work as chief statistician for the New York State Industrial Relations Department. I was with Bill and Frances up in the mountains when I got word to come down for that meeting with Olson -

Ward: On Tom Mooney.

LG: On Tom Mooney's pardon. We had cabins up there, some little place near Tahoe which was very lovely. I still remember that crazy trip down the mountain for that session.

Ward: Back to the kids. Now you were away a great deal of the time. Did they know who you were when you got home?

LG: Sometimes yes and sometimes no. It must have had a pretty rough impact on them because you still had the harassment of Harry going on during that time; the various trials. So, this was constantly in the press and in that neighborhood with some of the Catholic families, things were not always exactly the most cordial. Later on the kids remarked that they were always concerned as to whether I'd be around the next day. They simply assumed that these things go hand in hand.

Ward: They thought you might be in the pokey?

LG: That's right, in the pokey. Those were very hectic days and I'm sure it had an influence on the youngsters.

Ward: It didn't make them timid?

LG: No, quite to the contrary, because later on they were very active in everything from the civil rights movement to the sit-ins in San Francisco, the free speech fight over in Berkeley, anti-war demonstrations and so forth.

We stayed in San Francisco until around 1953 and '54. By that time, Ann was going to Roosevelt Junior High; she had graduated from Twin Peaks School. Lee was a good deal of a rebel at Twin Peaks, at one time being sent home by the principal because she had sassed her in some way.

And there were also a lot of pleasant incidents around the place. The kids loved story telling and I'd come home with all kinds of funny animal stories; some of them the kids would repeat in class. I remember telling Lee a story: this minister read about a parrot that could say the Lord's prayer.

He went down and checked it out. If you gave a small tug on the parrot's right foot, it would say the Lord's prayer. The man wanted a lot of money for it, several thousand dollars. The minister was so fascinated with this that he raised the money through the congregation and went down and bought the parrot.

And he was jubilant; he asked the owner of the parrot, "Now, let's go through this again; if you tug at his right foot he'll say the Lord's prayer." He tried it and the parrot said the Lord's prayer. "What happens if I tug his left foot?" "Why don't you try that?"

So, he tugged at his left foot and the parrot said, "Hail Mary." So, the minister said, "Wonderful, wonderful. Now, what would happen if I tugged at both his legs?" And, the parrot answered, "I'd fall on my ass, you damn fool!" The kids thought that was a great story; the next thing I know, Lee is repeating that story at school.

Ward: You didn't tell her any stories about the big, bad employers?

LG: No, we had an invented character, a man around whom I would tell stories around dinner time. The stories were about Johnny Escapo, a typical American rebel. He'd go down and help the workers in the bayous in Louisiana - all with the colorful background and everything else, you know. Invariably he ran into the crooked sheriff and the company man. Invariably he would be jailed and then the question was how he escaped.

You'd get the kids to inventing different devices, get them started by saying, "Well, what he did he asked for a piece of chalk - nothing more and then he would draw a door on the cell wall and walk out, you see." Or, he would blow a smoke ring and go through it. They had all these Johnny Escapo stories.

Later on, when I was ill my daughter, Lee, did a rather lovely piece on Johnny Escapo and brought it over to cheer me up. I showed it later to oh! what's his name? Gossage?

Ward: Who? Oh, Howard Gossage?

LG: Yes, I showed it to him one day and he said, "Well, they might run the thing just as is in Ramparts." He was fascinated with it. These stories were all about the same thing, the continuous struggle that was going on against evil and so forth and so on.

And there was a good deal of singing in the house. The kids loved these children's songs about it could be a beautiful world. So, there was a good deal of that around. We had a piano.

Ward: Did you play for them - when they were small?

LG: Yes, I did. I remember Teddy Kreps storing a small piano at our place. Later it had to be returned to the owner, so we bought an upright Steinway; really a very lovely piano. It was only $100 - this was after the war. We encouraged all the kids to take piano lessons. They studied with a teacher not too far away, a Mr. Herbert Jaffee, who was quite a good pianist and quite a good teacher. Ann studied with him, and Lee might have for a little while. Liza was too small. Lee later picked up the guitar.

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Ward: Now, about the children -

LG: Well, it was a lively household. Something was always jumping - lot of story-telling.

Ward: Did you do anything with the children other than tell stories? Any other things that you would take them around to?

LG: Oh, yeah - we spent a fair amount of time in Golden Gate Park, which was not too far off.

Ward: Did you get to know all the squirrels?

LG: Yes, we met a good many of them, and they had the small children's playground, which was a delight to them. They knew the neighborhood and moved around pretty much on their own as they got older and made friends.

The Andersens were close by for quite a while, but then they got this larger house out at Seacliff. As a matter of fact, Frances Foster (an obstetrician), his wife, delivered all three of our children and then made a flat offer that the fourth one was on the house.

Ward: But you didn't take it up?

LG: Terry tried and lost it, and then she decided that was about it.

Ward: Well, it was a harmonious family, as much as you saw of it?

LG: Oh, yes. My father and mother would get up here once in a while. They came up right after I bought the house because -

Ward: This house?

LG: Oh, they came up here too. But I'm talking about the house on Ashbury Terrace because the house had no bookcases, or very few. I wanted some bookcases. And they came up - and my dad assembled those bookcases! All he would do was to measure and then he would start cutting.

LG: We got a small table saw for him; he worked in the basement or out in back. He just cut pieces and assembled them, slapped them into place, put on some facing and it all fit. And those bookcases were alongside the fireplace and went right up to the ceiling. The kitchen was quite old; particularly the cabinets were old and cramped. He remodeled the whole kitchen, all the cabinets and so forth.

So it became a pleasant place to live, plenty of room. A good place for the youngsters. The main drawback was there was only one bath. It meant that at times I would suffer long delays until they finished up. I was definitely a minority of one in that household. I even gave a thought to putting another bath on the roof if that could be done through a closet.

Ward: Or arranging a clump of bushes in the back yard!

LG: We didn't have many bushes in the back yard. It was a small back yard and it was all paved. They have tiny lots over there - 20 or 25 feet wide and not more than 65 feet deep, so that the house took up practically everything.

The only battle I had going was one that I never won against the gophers in the front yard. There was a steep incline where you walked up some stairs and the gophers had made a home there for many, many years and they would not give up. I tried everything from gopher bombs, broken glass, you name it. I guess everything was digestible; a few months later they would be back again and you would see the plants disappearing down these holes; just couldn't win.

Ward: Well, anything more that you want to talk about regarding the family?

LG: No.

Ward: You were glad to be home when you could be home?

LG: Yes, and where we lived had certain distinct advantages; it was very close to downtown. When the union moved up to 150 Golden Gate, every once

LG: in a while I would walk down to work, so as to give Terry the car as well as to get some exercise.

Ward: You used to do that when you were working in the warehouse and lived on Telegraph Hill?

LG: Right; or sometimes when Terry needed the car, I'd get a ride down with George Andersen and he used to go right by there on the way to his office.

Ward: Not with Dan Flanagan, though?

LG: No, the only other person I ever got a ride with was a man named Preston Devine - he had the large house right on the corner of Piedmont and Ashbury. It would have been right across from where Bill Plunkert had lived.

Ward: Preston Devine? That rings a bell.

LG: Sure, he became a Superior Court judge. Some years later, in the early 1950s, we were in a roaring battle with the Teamsters and their attempt to raid us. This will all tie in later with developments beginning in 1949; it became fast, hot and heavy.

The employers or somebody had gone into court for an injunction during this big jurisdictional beef. The Teamsters were trying to raid Warehouse, they were putting up picket lines, trying to keep people out to force the ILWU to capitulate. Some of these battles wound up into swinging clubs and everything else.

I recall getting a ride with Judge Devine one morning; I knew the case was before him and I didn't plan to mention it. But he did. He said, "I know there's been an awful lot of trouble in the warehouses and there's demand for an injunction. I'm afraid I have to enjoin both of you." I didn't say a word; that was exactly what we wanted, because we didn't give a damn whether we were enjoined; it was the raiding we wanted enjoined.

He was a rather nice guy, I liked him. Then, around the corner was an attorney, a close friend of the (Vincent) Hallinans; James Purcell -

Ward: Purcell? Oh, yes, I remember that name.

LG: A very large Catholic family, either nine or ten kids, with a big house up there. I liked him and his wife very much. There were some people up the street that we got to know quite well. They had no children and they sort of adopted ours. So, we knew the neighbors around there. The man across the street was named Hogan. I used to throw a football around Ashbury Terrace with his kids.

Ward: When you were in San Francisco there were many, many nights when you were out at meetings?

LG: Oh, sure. Almost continuous -

Ward: So what would you say were the number of nights you spent home a year, on the average? A hundred?

LG: Oh, it would vary an awful lot from month to month or year to year. It would depend if you had strikes going on or big organizing drives. Oh, I would say that meetings took up at least three nights a week, sometimes more.

Ward: Even when things were running along?

LG: You had council meetings and other meetings at night, meetings of our executive board and meetings of the locals. The period from 1943, when I returned to San Francisco was not all that hectic, because the war was on until 1945. But at the end of 1945, 1946, we had the whole Hawaii thing going, so that -

Ward: That took up a lot of your time?

LG: Yes. Beginning in 1945, it took up a great deal of my time. Then in 1946 -

Ward: There wasn't any question of coming home at night, because you were in Hawaii?

LG: No, that's right; some of those stretches would be one or two months or more. The sugar strike took a lot of time, and it was practically commuting after that; in addition to the fact that we had all kinds of other things going. Things sort of stepped up; I got much busier.

A Horrendous Period

Ward: Let's move on now, to '49, a lot of things happened there.

LG: In 1949 we entered a completely new chapter. Some of our difficulties with the CIO began to surface in 1948, and pretty badly. Also there was the business of our difficulties with the CIO around the Marshall Plan (for assistance to war-torn Europe). It wasn't that we were so much opposed to the Marshall idea, but its method of application.

I never thought that was decisive in our relations with the CIO, for by 1948 it was pretty clear the CIO was moving to the right. I believe I mentioned to you our experience with them in the case of the longshore strike, and particularly the effort on the part of the employers; well, the CIO was lending itself to that, namely, this business of having the CIO as the guarantor of the contract.

So that our feelings weren't too cordial by then, even though we managed to side-step them. Nothing much came of it. And I mentioned Alan Heywood's role. Well, this was only the beginning. Come 1949, we entered into one of the most difficult, if not the most complicated, periods in the history of the union. That year saw some major struggles, one of which was the '49 longshore strike in Hawaii. A warehouse strike took place during that same period, in the bay area. We had the confrontation with the CIO at our convention in April, and later on our expulsion. During that time the raids began by the CIO and the Blue Card group; attempts to swing the local around.

The Teamsters decided this was a good time to launch a raid against the warehousemen. The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists was as active as could be. Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt were indicted during the 1949 longshore strike in Hawaii, so that you had a period there

LG: where you felt they were really closing in on all sides. You'd look around pretty desperately for a friend; things got very ugly and very tough. By 1953 we even made the rather critical move inside the International of electing a group of standby officers in the event Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt went to jail. Jimmy Fontz was to sit in as president, I would continue as secretary; Joe Bluur from Hawaii - Joe Kealaleo - would take over if Robertson had to go.

Ward: Which one do you want to take up first? Chronologically?

LG: We might as well. Our convention in 1949 was crucial because issues being posed by the CIO had to do with the basic autonomy of the ILWU. Part of the backwash was the endorsement of Henry Wallace; we were one of the few unions that campaigned for him.

I remember a Chicago labor guy, Sidney Lenz, asking me years later whether we thought that was a mistake, in retrospect. And I told him frankly I didn't think so; no matter what they said about Truman, the one thing he had done which was just horrendous was the initiation of the Cold War. There was every possibility of some sort of rapprochement within the world and he just shunted it aside.

Ward: All right - go on.

LG: The issue that mightily bothered the CIO was that once a political endorsement had been made, all unions were automatically bound. Not too different, I suppose, than the discipline they try to impose on the (British) Labor Party, except that we didn't have a Labor Party.

Our membership treasured its autonomy. The position taken by the International Union and by Harry at the executive council meetings was that once an issue had been debated in the CIO and the decision made, although he might differ with it, he was obligated to support that position within the ILWU. But he did not have the authority to deprive the membership of making

LG: their own decision, because this was literally the nature of the ILWU. It goes back to some of the same questions about the autonomous structure because even with convention resolutions, locals still reserve the right to go along with them, or not. Those delegates who were at the convention were generally obligated to support them.

The only place they were bound was when you took a referendum vote, let us say, on some special financial contribution, or a referendum vote particularly on a strike. That was different - then everybody was bound.

For example, if the Pacific Coast longshore district took a referendum vote on strike action, whether some particular port voted against it made no difference. If the majority carried, that was it. And it's an entirely different story from imposition of authority from the top.

Murray was in effect saying that you had all the autonomy in the world and that you had the right to do anything you wanted provided you voted "yes." Of course, this was not something our membership would buy. Well, come the convention, R. J. Thomas, who I think at one time had been president of the Automobile Workers, and Tim Flynn and Adolph Germer* appeared very briefly at the convention.

Well, it became a pretty hectic convention. Our position was that we had been loyal members of the CIO. We were guaranteed certain rights of autonomy at the time of affiliation and any move to try to curtail those rights or any move towards expulsion was in effect a betrayal. There are parts of the convention transcript which I think are worthwhile reading, particularly the discussions that went on around autonomy. Finally the resolution on autonomy was adopted by an overwhelming vote.

But you could see the handwriting on the wall. It wasn't just the ILWU; they were moving against all the so-called leftwing or progressive unions in the CIO; that included the United Electrical

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*CIO officials.

LG: Workers, the Fur Workers, the International Union of Mine-Mill and Smelter Workers, the State, County and Municipal Workers, the Agricultural Implement Workers, the American Communications Association, some nine or ten unions.

The question then became one of rather lengthy and hectic exchanges between ourselves and some of the other unions because we had formed a progressive group in the CIO, pressing all kinds of issues over the years. We felt very keenly that we could not just walk out, notwithstanding all the harassment. We thought we ought to fight to stay and that was reflected at the '49 convention.

Ours was a determined drive to try to stay because we felt very keenly that we had as much to do with the building of the CIO on the west coast as anybody had. We had put all kinds of manpower into this thing, a tremendous amount of energy; our guys had done all kinds of volunteer work on strikes, organization, anything going on.

Our people were mixed up to their ears in everything you could think of from helping to organize in the south, the assistance we tried to give on things like the aircraft plants, steel, rubber; I recall spending a lot of time with them around here; with the oil workers when they had some of their strikes. We thought there was quite a record of us putting up a battle for the CIO.

There was a story that John L. Lewis told: Harry had gone back to a CIO Executive Board meeting, the first he attended after we became part of the CIO, so this must have been the end of 1937 or early 1938. I guess everybody was telling Harry some of the things that ought to be included in his report. The net result was that Harry's report went on an awful long time.

John L. Lewis had a sort of camp follower by the name of Smith. Smith had a long, long beard and at one time it must have been a bright red - it was getting on the grey side; and somebody made the crack that when Harry started speaking, Smith was clean shaven!

LG: And Lewis looked at this chap and said that as far as he was concerned, any man who could take on the Teamsters the way we did in the Teamster Blockade could have the floor as long as he wanted. That ended that. We were the first major union on the west coast to go into the CIO and as soon as we did this enormous offensive was launched by Beck in collusion with the A F of L to put us out of business right then and there.

So, the upshot of it was that our whole battle at the convention was to stay and maintain our autonomy. Other unions went different ways, decided there was no purpose in sticking around and suffering the harassment; they just pulled out.

Well, on that one we didn't see eye to eye, although we remained friends. Gradually they were decimated: only two really remained, the UE (United Electrical Workers) and the ILWU. The UE suffered substantial casualties to the IUE (International Union of Electrical Workers) in the breakaway that was led by James Carey, who at one time had been secretary of the CIO.

XIII A STORY ALL BY ITSELF

The Great Longshore Strike In Hawaii

LG: Shortly after that convention a number of things happened: one was the 1949 longshore strike in Hawaii, which was sort of the turning point following the sugar strike. The 1946 sugar strike was whether or not we could get a toe hold; we won that. In 1947 we had taken the set-back in pineapple. In 1949 there was a combination of two things, survival and whether or not we would make a breakthrough against the semi-colonial structure down there.

Ward: And wage parity with the west coast?

LG: That was the issue; the longshore strike is a story all by itself.

Ward: You want to go into that now?

LG: Let's go into the longshore strike and then we'll get back to this question of the CIO. I recall it was during the longshore strike in Hawaii; I don't think we were in a position to send a delegation to the CIO convention. I think it took place in Portland, that year. Bob Robertson went up there, on the same principle of trying to stay in the CIO and at the same time fight for certain rights. Not that we got very far.

Back to the longshore strike in Hawaii. The union was reconstituted in longshore toward the end of the war; martial law had been imposed.

LG: We had gotten certification from the NLRB, in 1941. And the certification had been in effect for a short while when the war came along, so that there was a long hiatus of some four years.

Some of the longshoremen had been driven from the waterfront, particularly those they thought might have Japanese ideological ties; but they had to keep them around there since they're the people who do the work.

The same thing is true in the rest of Hawaii. That's the reason you never had the relocation centers in Hawaii that you had over here on the mainland.

In 1945 we went into negotiations in longshore and got some improvements, at least in wages, formalization of the contract and a few other things. Though, I remember making a pretty bad blunder during the situation. I didn't think it was at the time, but it turned out to be, not so much in terms of the gains that were made, but in the reactions of the membership.

The membership, over the years, instead of picking up things like basic wages and beginning to move in the right direction, picked up little penalty cargo things, like cement, even though later on it never came in sacks, just in bulk. It would have say a 5 or 10 cent an hour penalty. They had little penalties on a number of items.

Well, one of the things that turned out to be possible during the negotiations was to pick up some extra money on wages, in exchange for simplifying this list of penalties. Some penalty cargoes you'd keep, of course. Some penalty cargoes would mean nothing because they were gone, but they might appear once in a while and would become more of a headache than it was worth.

Obviously, you would keep any penalties on things like explosives or ammunition, but on some of the other items, I didn't think it was all that worthwhile and I figured the trade-off was worth it. But when you went to the membership:

LG: "You gave something up." I don't think anybody talks about it anymore; it disappeared very, very quickly, but there is such a thing as out-negotiating yourself once in a while.

As to how it weighs in the whole balance of things, that wasn't it at all. They had gotten a few little things and by god along came this character from the International and gave them away, even though he got something in exchange.

Anyway, longshore contracts began to improve over the years, but in the main as good as we could do was to come close to picking up the same amount of wage increases that the men had received under the Pacific Coast agreement.

Bear in mind, Hawaii is a separate group of employers; as far as they were concerned, some of them did not exist on the mainland, like McCabe-Hamilton, Renny; Theo Davies; C. Brewer; American Factors had some operations on Kauai. Alexander Baldwin had operations in Kahului.

Those employers had no relation to the west coast employers and were very provincial in their thinking, orientated completely to Hawaii. The agencies all had little longshore spin-offs with the islands divided; like the Big Island was C. Brewer, Kauai was Amfac and Maui was Alexander Baldwin port operations.

Theo Davies had some clerks and a small longshore operation in Honolulu. Castle and Cooke was the largest stevedore employer, part of their agency again; and then there was an independent outfit called McCabe, Hamilton and Renny which for many years did a lot of the army and navy work; an interesting type of employer.

The guy who headed the outfit, Jack Guard, was a very shrewd, paternalistic character. He knew the advantage of being around; he'd be there, very first thing on Monday morning. A lot of the guys were broke and they needed twenty until next pay day, or ten, or what-have-you, and he just handed it out. Apparently, he had an excellent memory and would make his notes later, but there was no question; he just had a big roll of bills -

Ward: Damn smart!

LG: Damn smart and particularly in the case of the single men, the money would go over the weekend. And that included a number of our Filipinos who had blown it at the dance hall. Carl Demaso has a whole show on that.

Anyway, this group was not part of the west coast employers, and not part of any "new look" on the west coast. Not at all, quite the contrary. Matson, of course, was tied into the west coast and was a dominant employer, yet in the whole scheme of things it might have been influenced primarily by Castle and Cooke. Castle and Cooke was their stevedoring company.

The Matson Steamship Company in its early years had stockholders who were all members of the Big Five. Alexander Baldwin had a piece of Matson. Castle and Cooke had a piece of Matson. Later on, they decided to divest themselves because of certain anti-trust things that were kicking around.

They would send all their sugar via the Matson ships because there was no other way to send it; also pineapple; consequently it would become a form of restraint of trade because there was no other way for a shipping company to get in there and get any return cargoes from Hawaii to the mainland.

They could get plenty of cargoes going down; shippers who were either unhappy with Matson or figured they were overcharging or bad service. But coming back, they would come empty. Pretty damn tough for a company to operate that way and make a buck. The outfit that later on bought Matson was Alexander Baldwin, primarily because they had a tremendous amount of cash.

Well, I'm just giving you a little bit of the background; the contract, when it was opened in 1949, was open on wages only. This was quite a common thing in Hawaii, where the employers would want a long term contract. We were fearful of

LG: them and thought there were a lot more things to be gained before we were ready to sign a long term contract, so we signed kind of peculiar agreements.

Frankly, in some ways it was a little bit fictitious; if a contract is open on wages and two other items and that was the way it was spelled out - or sometimes it was spelled out by three items; or sometimes you would spell out two and you're open on two; it was true in sugar; it was true in longshore - under those circumstances, you might as well open the whole damn agreement.

The employers had the idea that if a contract was open on a limited number of things, this in some ways would be a restriction or a handicap or a drawback on the union's willingness to fight. Of course, it doesn't work out that way. Later on the employers realized it. They were wedded to the idea, though.

But if you open on wages only and you want to change something else in the contract, that's not the most difficult thing in the world. You just make the wage demands so high, that before you settle, the employer finally has to say, "All right, what the devil's around this?" We'd say, "Well, we really need this big hunk of money, but we might have some flexibility if we could only get that other thing straightened out."

Having the contract open on one issue and the right to strike is enough, if you are determined to use that opening and get the maximum for it. The net result was that come 1949 the only issue was wages - no other item open in the contract. The demand we made was that the time had come to close the gap.

On the west coast we had just picked up an increase of 15 cents an hour for the longshoremen, across the board. Bear in mind, the Hawaii longshore contract did not have a lot of the things - as it still doesn't, for that matter - that they had on the west coast. Hawaii did not have the hiring hall, nor the regulations on sling load limits that prevailed on the west coast. They weren't in effect in Hawaii.

LG: You did not have the same kind of grievance machinery where the union had the right to police the contract and discipline the men before the employer had a crack at them. Very big fundamental differences in terms of the right of the individual and security on the job. The employer literally had just about complete managerial authority over the men with damn few restrictions.

Sure we had some things in the contract that were different or even a bit better, such as sick leave. We had some holidays with pay which went back to that whole structure of paternalism. So here we were open on wages only. Those of us who were working on the contract - Jack, the committee - felt very keenly that the time had come to close the gap.

Ward: Did Harry play any role in this? Was he there at the time?

LG: No, he wasn't there at the time negotiations broke off. He was there later on as the strike grew in intensity. There were some rough periods where they tried to enjoin us and so forth. Our demand was something over the 15 cents, anything to close the gap.

The contract expired on May 1st, and there's the possibility that the employers thought it was more than a coincidence. We negotiated until midnight of that day and beyond that. The employers had offered 12 cents and that was it.

George Hillenbrand was down there from the Federal Conciliation Service. George is rather a good egg. He had been a former baseball catcher. He was a large and very pleasant, easy guy to get along with and had a great deal of confidence in the ILWU.

I used to make it my business to protect George because I can recall times where we had to tell George, "Look, it might be just as well if you weren't present at the sessions; we'll make sure that you are taken care of." That meant that he would be called in before any settlement would be announced.

LG: I recall one occasion when we had to chase him all over town to find him because we couldn't announce the settlement. The employers didn't give a damn, but we did. He was a good egg, we liked him and under no circumstances would we get a double cross from him. I recall one time, I would walk along the beach to the Moana Hotel.

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Ward: You ran into this man at the Moana Hotel -

LG: I walked through a large lanai at the Moana Hotel and I recognized a voice. Here was George Hillenbrand with a whole group of ladies, some of them a little advanced in years. He was telling them about his job and the way he had to deal with these rough, tough characters. They were just sitting there open-mouthed.

I stood there and listened a little while and decided that this was no time to say, "Hello," and sneaked out the other way. (laughter) But, George, he liked his job and liked Hawaii and liked the people, and there's a story about him later that is just hilarious. It was during the sugar negotiations. I'll try to remember later on so as you won't have to leave it out.

Anyway, he was down there as federal mediator. We were meeting in a group, in one of the cottages right across the street from the Moana Hotel. The employers were in one cottage and Hillenbrand and we in another one, and he was doing the usual jogging back and forth. It was getting close to midnight, the strike deadline. Our membership, in many cases with the wives and kids, were waiting for us at one of the public schools in downtown Honolulu. They had been sitting around since about 10:00 o'clock -

Ward: This was on the night of May 1st?

LG: Yes. The employers just stuck on this 12 cents and finally George came and said, "Look, I think we can get them to 14 cents, but I don't think we can move them beyond that." We said, "No,

LG: that won't do." "Well, he said, "What if it's 15 cents, will you close the deal?" I said, "No, we couldn't. Make it 16 cents and we'll close the gap by one penny. And at that rate it would take us 32 years to get equal pay for equal work; I'll recommend it, even though it's nothing like what the guys consider they are entitled to. It's the same union working the same cargoes on the same ships and the same owners like Matson, both ends of the line.

"There's absolutely no reason for it; they don't have a lot of the things the mainland has; they work the eight hour day, and not the six and two; they don't have the hiring hall; they don't have the sling loads." He came back and said, "No, they won't budge; what you're talking about is not in sight."

Mind you, whether 15 cents was around or not, I don't know. I had a feeling at that moment that he was prepared to go all out to press for it, if we had said okay. Fourteen was there, no question about that. So the strike at that moment broke over the issue of maybe two cents; maybe one cent - that narrow.

Finally, as we walked out in the street, the newspaper men around, I asked him one thing, "Look," - and this later became an important issue in the strike propaganda - "as I understand it, George, your oath of office requires that before you permit an industrial dispute to reach the stage of a strike, you propose arbitration."

So he said, "Well, how about arbitrating?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, that's that." But we used it later on. We felt that in arbitration we could not do too badly. We'd pick up something, more than the 15 cents; the record was big enough and strong enough to hold up. Well, the next morning the strike was on. But, it was a weekend.

Ward: Oh, that was why the members could afford to sit up half the night?

LG: Right - and plus the fact that there was not too much work scheduled for that weekend, so the strike wouldn't really be effective until Monday. An odd incident occurred over that weekend. I guess it was either Saturday night or Sunday morning. I got a call from Dwight Steele who was with the Employers Council that he and Blaisdell and Alec Budge (of the Big Five) would like to see us.

Ward: Who?

LG: Alec Budge - bear in mind that over the years, in all these negotiations, in sugar, longshore, and other industries, the heads of the Big Five had never appeared at a set of negotiations. Only their minions would appear. For some reason or other this was a no-no with them. Budge had decided he had to talk to us.

I called Jack and he said, "Sure, let's go out and talk to him." Jack knew who he was, of course, but I'm not sure he had ever met him. Pinky Budge, they called him. Pinky Budge. He was, well, he wasn't a young man, very well kept, rosy cheeks; I guess that's why he was named "Pinky". I think Steele picked us up; either that or I drove out because the union had an old second hand jeep that I used to run around.

Anyway, we go by there for breakfast. Budge is a very affable host, very pleasant; shows us through his orchid collection, which is sort of standard in Hawaii. He lived out in the area of Kohala, near Diamond Head - just on the bend there. He was cordial, but I wouldn't say enthusiastic or friendly; as soon as breakfast is over he gets right down to business saying, "Well, we think you ought to recommend the 12 cents."

"It's been turned down and I'm practically positive the members would not take it - they feel very strongly about closing the gap and looking for parity with the mainland." He goes into an interesting talk about why things were different in Hawaii and he started talking about all the blessings the men had living there.

LG: After all, they had this wonderful climate; didn't require the same sort of clothes you needed on the mainland; you had the lovely beaches and all this recreation that was available to the workers and their families, something you didn't have on the mainland. This guy was convinced of it; there was very little purpose in pressing the issue.

Of course, you got such a revealing picture of their attitude - the real missionary attitude, carried along through the years; they were helping these poor, benighted natives and sharing the blessings that were there because the Big Five were the ones who had developed the Islands.

Never mind that a lot of Hawaiians felt they were better off before the Big Five came along. You could tell very readily after a few attempts of trying to steer the conversation that you would get nowhere. He was just absolutely convinced that this was the way that unions operated and that if we recommended the 12 cents the members would have taken it.

Well, there was no use sitting there any longer; finally I turned to him and said, "Well, Mr. Budge, I've been in many negotiations in my life, but this is the first time I've come across someone who decided to take God's gifts and put them on the pay check." That was the end of the breakfast.

As we walked out of there, I turned to Jack and said, "If this thing lasts a day less than four months, I'll be the most surprised man in the world." Well, I was wrong again - it lasted six months. That's how the strike got started. It's one of the longest strikes in the history of the United States that was won.

Ward: How many men were involved in the strike?

LG: When the longshore strike started, I'd say in all the ports combined somewhere around between 1600 or 2000 men. I'm not sure, because in some of the ports the major conversion from bag sugar to bulk sugar was already under way.

LG: Bear in mind that when they converted from bag sugar to bulk, a port like Hilo which had five to six hundred men went down to somewhere around a hundred very quickly. The same thing would be true of other ports which rely primarily on sugar; I'm talking about ports like the one in Port Allen. It would also be true of Kahului and to some extent even in Honolulu, because they handle the bag sugar from plantations around Oahu.

Ward: Well, at any rate, between 1600 and 2000?

LG: Yes; containers had not come along yet. There were something over a thousand men in Honolulu, maybe more.

Ward: How did the cargo move after the strike got going?

LG: It didn't, it was a tight strike.

Ward: What about the incoming cargo?

LG: Oh, we made the promise and announcement from from day one that the union would handle all the passenger cargo, mail, baggage and perishables. Employers were determined not even to use us for those things.

There was a man whom I got to know in San Francisco named Antone Marguleas. He was a fruit and vegetable shipper, Paramount Export, one of the biggest in Hawaii. I'd known Antone because his office was right on the corner where the old Warehouse hall was; we struck up an acquaintance then.

Ward: Down on Clay Street?

LG: Down on Clay Street, right next to the police station, Clay and Drum; and we used to chat whenever I would bump into him. Once in a while, he would get me by the ear and sort of haul me down to show me what was happening to some of his vegetables. Sometimes he was right, the way the men would bounce these crates of fresh cherries, grapes; didn't realize how they were shaking these things around. They weren't all that heavy, they were only 15 or 20 pound crates.

LG: But I get a call; the strike has been on only a few days and we'd been working late because there was an immediate, tremendous flare-up of unbelievably endless hostility against the union by the newspapers in Hawaii; just the most hysterical campaign you ever came across. Particularly by the Honolulu Advertiser.

Obviously the whole thing had been geared up; this was going to be the showdown with the union - put us in our place once and for all. Hawaii was for the Hawaiians - they had their own kind of wage structure and their own life style.

I'm awakened around 4:30 in the morning. It was a long distance call from Antone Marguleas. He said, "Ive got a whole bunch of stuff on one of the Matson ships - it's about to leave for Hawaii and I understood that your policy is to unload all perishables." I said, "Yes, we'll unload all perishables."

"Well, Matson just told me that they will not take responsibility for discharge of those perishables; they advised me to take the stuff off the ship at once." I said, "Frankly, I don't think you have to. What do you think will happen?"

"Hell," he says, "if I take the shipment off at once, I'll go broke overnight. That's a distress sale. The produce merchants are different people and they will be down there - oh, yes, they'll buy it. (laughter) For a dime a dollar!" There's other supplies available and they have the guy over a barrel.

Ward: Matson was trying to lock out the shipper!

LG: Sure, so I said, "Look, you go ahead and tell Matson that you're not taking the stuff off the ship. I'll get hold of Jerry Bulcke " - I think he was president of Local (Longshore) 10 at the time.

So I get hold of Jerry and said, "Tell Matson that unless that stuff stays on board ship, nothing is going to sail, including other ships - military cargo and some of these things that we

LG: should unload." Finally, we forced Matson to take it and I guess that Antone saved an awful bundle, if not bankruptcy. We used this later in a newspaper against the employers' claim that we were trying to starve out Hawaii.

Ward: I think this is a good point to stop for today.

LG: Okay. We can go into some of the aspects of the '49 strike later on, including the fact finding hearing, the attempt to go over the head of the union, the indictment of Harry, Robertson and Schmidt.

Ward: Very good. Okay.

(Interview 20: 1 August, 1978)

A Long, Difficult Strike

Ward: Now, we pick up the longshore strike again - '49. You said it was one of the longest strikes ever, six months long.

LG: That's right and it began on May First.

Ward: Yes, you mentioned the significance.

LG: Let's see - May, June, July, August, September and settled somewhere around October or November. It was a long strike. It's a rare thing, by the way, to win a strike that goes that long.

Ward: I know that.

LG: As a matter of fact, when a strike goes that long, any union will figure they are pretty well off just to go back intact. It was an odd strike. It's very difficult to strike on only one issue. The contract was still in effect; the only issue that was open was wages and here was a strike which went this length of time and where the membership held intact.

LG: All of us are familiar with the barrage of criticism that the unions have had, where the employers try to get workers to figure "Okay, how much are you losing each week and how long will it take you to make it up?" In other words, if you are on strike let us say for 10 cents an hour and the employers offer a nickel an hour, and you strike for a month, okay, how long does it take to make up that extra nickel?

This is very typical employer propaganda. Of course, if it had its total effect inside the unions, I doubt if they would ever have struck. It's not what you get in that particular strike; it's what you build from that point on.

This strike didn't include a fundamental issue such as a cut in a work day, and other long-term sociological benefits that go beyond the question of just wages alone. In the case of Hawaii, the wage question took on a different significance, whether a so-called island or semi-colonial wage structure would continue or whether we would finally break through.

If there was any area in which we would break through, it would not be in sugar, because we had already moved substantially ahead of other agriculture. And there were other factors involved; everything from mechanization, large scale agriculture, and so forth and so on.

Longshore really got to the nub of the issue, namely, different pay for identically the same work; if anything, harder work, because I think I mentioned to you they did not have things such as sling load limits; very hard work. If you watch the men in the hold there muling cargo, they really put out. All kinds of employer gimmicks which fundamentally were just speed-ups.

It was not uncommon, if a shipowner was in a hurry to get a ship out and wanted to finish up loading, he would pass the word along and the walking boss or the gang boss would tell the members of the gang, "If you can finish this thing up in say seven hours, we'll give you ten -" (a system in Hawaii called ukupau; pau means finished.) Incidentally, a not unusual thing in Hawaii industry.

LG: There were certain very dirty jobs around the mills during repair seasons, for example, where they had to tear down the old furnaces for the boiler; this was a difficult and dirty job. None of the workers would take it on an hourly basis, or if they did, they would sure take their time.

The employers solved that one by making ukupau deals. "Okay, men, get the job done and here's how much you get paid for it." Sort of a business of sub-contracting a particular job. But these in the case of longshore became speed-up methods. Sure, the guys might have made a couple of extra bucks on that shift, but they also set a new work pace and that, of course, is in the back of the supervisor's mind and the walking boss . . . .

Ward: If they can do it?

LG: If they can do it, why not do it again?

Ward: Without the extra pay?

LG: Correct, so that it was a hardworking situation for all the longshoremen; even though the issue was confined to wages, it carried all the sociological overtones.

Ward: And the differential was 15 cents, wasn't it?

LG: No, it was far more than 15 cents. The differential must have been 15 plus 32, something like 47 cents an hour because the longshoremen on the West Coast had just gotten a 15 cent boost. Somewhere in the negotiations I mentioned the fact that if the employers even offered us as little as 16 cents -

Ward: Oh, yes!

LG: There would be no strike even though it would take 32 years to come up to parity. The employers saw it as upsetting the whole Hawaii wage structure; their traditional relationship to people who worked, what they paid them. This ran all the way from a housemaid to a guy working longshore.

LG: This is what really jelled everything in the Islands, in the sense of a barrage by the employers and the newspapers, which they were closely allied with, of course. The moment the strike began, the publicity barrage was just endless, continued throughout the length of the strike, including front page editorials that were addressed to "Dear Joe".

The "Dear Joe" Stories

LG: The "Dear Joe" editorials were a report, - apocryphal, of course - to Joseph Stalin of how the union was carrying out its appointed job of destroying the economy of Hawaii and taking over the Islands. The workers ought to appreciate the geographical and climatic surroundings in which they were working; it was a different kind of life than these people who had to suffer in San Francisco or in Los Angeles; so these things as I said, jelled very quickly.

I recall saving one copy of an issue of the newspaper which sort of carried the ball on the whole thing - the Honolulu Advertiser -

Ward: The most conservative of the whole bunch, wasn't it?

LG: By far. The Star Bulletin at the time was owned by Joe Farrington. Farrington was the Hawaii delegate to Congress - this was before statehood. Farrington wasn't quite as intemperate about the strike, and later on he did carry some stories on developments in Washington, including quite a beef that developed around the question of arbitration, with Senator Wayne Morse carrying the ball back there.

The word around was that Farrington was in ill grace because he carried some fairly accurate reports without a violent condemnation of the idea of arbitration, because we had proposed arbitration very early in the strike. Even on that one the newspapers carried editorials and cartoons.

LG: They had one, for example, of a couple in the dark and he's turning to her and saying, "Well, let's arbitrate," with all the salacious overtones. In other words, everything they could pull out. As I said, I saved one copy of the Advertiser and if you are interested I'll look around and see if I can find it.

Ward: Yes, I would be.

LG: This one page had a headline, six of the eight columns on the front page devoted to blasts on the strike in one way or another, and another "Dear Joe" editorial. This was the employers' strike bulletin - that's all.

Ward: What effect did it have on the members?

LG: I'd say that in some areas of the union the guys sort of pulled back into a shell a little bit, not a great deal; none of them ran, and that included the other groups where they might be more isolated, say, on the sugar plantations.

I know a lot of it was picked up by people like school teachers, who would sort of scold some of our members; here were these longshoremen asking for more money than schoolteachers made. Just to give you an idea of the atmosphere: I'd gone out to a restaurant where I ate quite often. I planned on having some dinner without this continual barrage of work and the bullshit that was really flying around town. It had reached a stage of pretty bad hysteria.

All of a sudden the bartender comes over to me and says, "Look, there's a group of ladies there; they'd like very much to buy you a drink." I figured it would be the usual stuff, you know; nobody wanted to buy you a drink; they wanted to talk to you. They don't want to talk with you, they want to talk at you.

I sat down and there were I guess four or five women there - school teachers. They had an evening out together after a meeting or something, and I hardly got to the drink when . . . .

Ward: Well, how did they know who you were?

LG: Oh, there were a lot of pictures in the papers; they knew who I was, all right.

Ward: You were a public figure already?

LG: Oh, by that time, yes. They started right in. What right did the union have? These Filipinos - a lot of the longshoremen were Filipinos and some of them had not been in Hawaii terribly long - what business did they have demanding wages far in excess of what the teachers had? We'd heard it before, not uncommon.

I let them go on for a while, trying to parry the stuff as best I could; this was a business of trying to tell them "Okay, we're not asking too much. You're not getting enough." That did not satisfy them. If it had been the other way around that they had gotten theirs first, they wouldn't say it, you see. Then, if the longshoremen wanted to come along, that's different.

There was the usual jive that they'd had four years of college, teachers' training and so forth and so on. I didn't want to get into a quarrel, so I decided to break it up. I said, "Well, the main reason these longshoremen are asking for more, the reason they're entitled to more, and that includes the Filipinos you're talking about, is that they're a lot more intelligent than you are."

That, of course, led to a tremendous explosion and finally someone said, "What to you mean by that?" I said, "Very simple - they had the brains to organize. And when you have it, you might do better too." That broke it off and I walked out and ate somewhere else. So, it was that sort of atmosphere.

The "Broom Brigade"

LG: Very shortly after the strike began, a so-called "broom brigade" appeared. The broom brigade initially was made up of haole women, wives of superintendents, owners; they must have been alter egos of the Chamber of Commerce people; the wives of some of the big cheeses, obviously organized by the haole community.

They appeared in front of the union office, down at Pier 11 where the Matson came in. I told you about Paul Robeson coming in there on the Lurline?

Ward: I don't think you did.

LG: Sure, when Paul Robeson came down for a series of concerts.

Ward: You mentioned Paul a couple of times, but not in that context, as I remember.

LG: Sure, he came down on the Lurline. In fact, Jack and I induced him to come down there.

Ward: What relationship did it have to any union events in Hawaii?

LG: We were the first ones to sponsor a concert artist in some of these sugar places like Wailua or out on Honokaa.

Ward: I see, that would have been after the first sugar strike.

LG: Yes, it was after the sugar strike. It could have been after the pineapple strike. I remember going to pick up Paul because he was staying at the Niumalu where I stayed and we drove down to pick up Larry Brown off the ship, because his pianist wouldn't fly. Earl Robinson (composer of the song, "Joe Hill") came down at the same time.

"We the Women" or "The Broom Brigade" picketing ILWU offices at Pier 11, Honolulu, May 31, 1949

On California Street in San Francisco, 1949, local longshoremen and warehousemen in support of Hawaii longshore strike, picketed Governor Ingram Stainback of Hawaii while he was making a speech before Merchant's Exchange

LG: And we sponsored the concert tour; he sang twice at McKinley. You know, Paul had this amazing quick ear; within a couple of days he had picked up Filipino songs, a Hawaiian song and, of course, he already had Chinese songs; so it was a fascinating response he got from people as he moved around Hawaii.

Ward: You mean, the songs he could render in their own language?

LG: Right - right, and it was a very effective tour. I think he was the only concert artist who would appear for many, many years outside of Honolulu. They'd come to Honolulu, put on a performance with the Honolulu symphony, maybe, but they didn't go anywhere else. Marian Anderson had appeared once in Wailuku - that's over on Maui. Whether anybody else had ever appeared there I don't know, but to have somebody like Paul Robeson going out to a sugar town or up to Honokaa - that was really something quite different.

Ward: Well, this is where . . . . ?

LG: That just happened to be the location where the Lurline used to tie up, the passenger pier. Our office was there; a wide street, sort of, not exactly a park, a few palm trees; it wasn't well kept up. It was in front of the office with a small division there where a car could pull up.

These women formed a circle around this tiny park and would parade around there with their brooms, the brooms signifying that we are supposed to be swept out of Hawaii. The so-called broom brigade went on for a long, long time.

There were a few ugly things, but luckily the guys in the main kept their heads, and after a while began to have a lot of fun with it. This was also another reflection of the same period, with photographs of the broom brigade, stories quoting the women about what had to be done, all these evil forces that were trying to dominate Hawaii; the usual stuff.

Ward: And this broom brigade, did it function like a picket line, practically? Did they circle around?

LG: Yes, circling around and . . . .

Ward: Was it erratic or on a regular basis?

LG: They tried to continue it on a regular basis. That's when they made some mistakes - bad ones. Some of the women, after a while, decided that it was a little too much of a chore for them, so why not have their maids do it? All of a sudden you would see one or two Japanese, maybe a Filipina, in the line of march doing their ladyship's stint for her.

That's when our guys began to get very, very abrasive; they would stand around and spot some of these gals; they knew who they were; you'd hear the mumbling under the breath and what they were saying was not complimentary.

Much of the talk, practically all of it was in pidgin, and they were using some of their slang, you know. These are Hawaiian expressions they use for a company fink; and pretty soon these poor local gals, if they could have found a hole, they would have gone right in; they were so unhappy. I think on that score the haole women did themselves more harm than good.

Four hours walking around in that hot sun is not the most pleasant thing in the world and I doubt if they had done it ever before in their lives; maybe around the swimming pool. Some of the women came down there in their high-heeled shoes, and that was wonderful to watch.

Then, one of our guys, Ernie Arena, a very good craftsman, got the bright idea, why don't we entertain these women? I guess he talked to Jack about it and Jack figured okay. Ernie brought down one of these portable phonographs with a loudspeaker and hooked the whole thing up. Then he started entertaining them. He got some marches and started them off very slowly; then he kept picking up the tempo.

Well, you know what happens when somebody is moving around and you start a march in a certain rhythm which is fairly comfortable. Pretty soon

LG: the tempo goes up; it took a while before they realized what was going on! Ernie was just wearing them down right through their shoe leather; he was having nothing but fun for a few days.

Then, he decided that wasn't getting all the results he wanted, plus the fact that by that time people in the area would come around to listen to the records because they knew something was going on. So, he digs up a whole group of Chinese funeral chants. They were in this extremely high intonation of weird keening; this would drive practically anybody out of their minds.

As a matter of fact, the main complaint was inside the union office! The workload was enormous and the gals, while they understood what we were trying to do, felt this was sort of rough to work under. That didn't faze Ernie - he was having himself a ball.

The next group of records he got were by Spike Jones, some of which were a take-off on Hawaii tunes and some of which were just plain coarse, about the old grey mare, she ain't what she used to be. (laughter) There was a lot of burping and farting, so he kept playing these. And they were close enough without being called vulgar; nobody could attack Spike Jones. After all, he was an American performer. This sort of thing was going on and it gave the broom brigade a little more levity.

Then, Henry Schmidt was down there . . . .

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Ward: So, Henry Schmidt was very busy.

LG: Oh, he was down there, even before the strike broke, or came down there immediately. And he camped with it for the entire strike. We had set up a soup kitchen across the street from the office and down about a block. They'd gotten the second floor of an old building where they were able to get a stove and a lot of cooking stuff; that's where they fed the longshoremen and the families.

LG: They were getting good help from the plantations, small farmers, from fishing parties; I recall one time they brought in about 18 turtles,and not small turtles. Everyone of them must have weighed over 100 pounds. There was a week or so of the finest eating you ever had. Turtle steak, turtle soup, turtle stew, hash; good food.

Henry decided that the thing to do was not to take these women all that seriously. If they were willing to stay out there in the hot sun, fine, and he finally got somebody to bring out a little water, although everybody said, "The hell with it. Let them have their maids go for that too." Henry picked up pidgin very quickly, so he produced a whole menu in pidgin and distributed it to the women and invited them to lunch. None of them showed.

Ward: In the soup kitchen?

LG: In the soup kitchen, naturally. It was the only place we could invite them for lunch; we didn't have any money. That was just like Henry.

It was during the strike that I had to make a quick trip back to the mainland - not for very long. On trip back, Eddie Tangen was with me. That was because the Lurline had come in about a week after the strike and the crew piled off. The Marine Cooks and Stewards took the lead and walked off the ship.

Ward: Eddie was the secretary of the Marine Cooks and Stewards.

LG: I think he was secretary, right. Anyway, Eddie came along. He knew the Islands fairly well and, of course, he knew the men. By that time the company decided that they were not going to keep putting these men up in Hawaii in hopes that the Lurline would sail.

They knew it was a long drawn out beef, so there was the question of making arrangements for the seamens' transportation back, and that they were paid off and so on. There were other groups of seamen who had piled off. Do you remember Mike Snyder in San Francisco?

Ward: No -

LG: He's now with OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). After he left the ships he became a member of the Electrical Workers Union; he was an electrician; I recall him leading a walkout on one of the NMU ships. The Sailors Union looked the other way; at least they didn't actively break the strike on us; that was important.

Fun On An Airplane

LG: Anyway, on this trip down, Eddie Tangen was with me; Jim Blaisdell was on board the plane and so was a guy named Duncan McBride; this was an old, old Hawaii family.

Ward: I think you mentioned McBride once before.

LG: I'm not sure - I mentioned McCabe, Hamilton and Renny - not McBride. There's a sugar plantation called McBride on the island of Kauai. Anyway, I think he was with Castle and Cooke. Jim and McBride were sitting up in first class and Eddie and I were back there in the tourist section.

Jim comes back there and says, "Why don't you and your friend - I had introduced him to Eddie - come up and have a drink?" I said, "Well, you're up in the first class section." He says, "Well, that's all right; we'll make arrangements to have a drink in the men's room there." I think it was a Boeing Stratocruiser and it had a very large place where there were several lounge seats where you could wait and take your turn for a shave, a real first class lounge.

So, we sat around there; Jim had a bottle, we had a drink. Somehow he found a pair of dice in his pocket and we started a crap game that went on for most of the trip. Eddie hit a terrific streak of luck and he just couldn't miss. Pretty soon I had been cleaned out and Jim Blaisdell had been cleaned out.

LG: McBride managed to get in his last few pennies to cover one bet. It's funny how you recall some of these little things - Eddie rolls out and his point was eight. He rolls again and sure enough it was eight, except one of the dice was resting against the little combing at the bottom - cocked dice! Blaisdell, I think, wanted to leave without a parachute at that point.

Eddie doesn't say a word, picks up the dice, rolls them again and it's another eight. Lucky they were Blaisdell's dice; so Eddie cleans out the game. I'll never forget Eddie turning around to MacBride as we were leaving the plane and saying, "If you fellows need money for cab fare --" But their wives were waiting for them.

That story was so good, I told it to the guys when I got down there. I don't know how much Eddie made on the trip, maybe a couple of hundred bucks. The guys said, "Well, you better get some beer." So, he winds up bringing about 20 cases of beer to the soup kitchen. Some of the guys said, "Hell, with that kind of money you can bring us some whiskey too." Anyway, by the time we got through with Eddie it became an expensive trip for him.

The strike hadn't been all that long when Blaisdell wanted to have a session; he was riding around in an open car. I mentioned it to Jack and he said, "Go ahead and meet with him and see what happens." I went out to his house and Steele was along; I was sitting in the middle and Blaisdell was driving.

As we drove up underneath a portico of his house, a centipede dropped in my lap. Blaisdell and Steele left that car so quickly, it was unbelievable. I didn't know what to do, but the centipede ran, luckily. Well, I happened to mention the incident to somebody; funny how all kinds of superstitions and everything else come out in situations of that sort.

Somebody concluded that we're in luck now; that's a good sign, if a centipede drops on you without biting you. So, they have these Hawaiian

LG: things, like you'll hear expressions by one worker, "Somebody tried to give me cahuna." That means tried to give him almost like an evil eye, or bad spirits. Then people will have certain animals who they figure are their friends, like this guy I've known for many, many years down there, this great fisherman; a shark was his friend, amakua. Anyway, some of these things just pop out during a strike.

Ward: That little incident kind of heartened the guys, I guess.

LG: Oh, you reach for anything. Incidentally, Henry loved little things like ditties and doggerel. I don't know if you ever heard Henry play the harmonica, but that's the sort of thing he enjoys. He also wrote a version of "My Lurline lies over the ocean"; he composed that one and wrote the words for it.

Ward: Oh, yes, I've heard that one.

LG: So, the spirit of the guys was good. They hung tough. Well, I mentioned the broom brigade; of course, things of that sort also set off a lot of nuts. Of course, how many are nuts and how many are paid to do it? You don't know. There was an attempt to burn down the office; they started a fire which luckily was caught before it did too much damage.

Threatening telephone calls became sort of customary and after a while we worked something out with the switchboard operator to hang on to her calls when I wanted to get some sleep. And then there were a whole series of efforts to break the strike. The big crusade in Hawaii was that we were trying to starve out the Islands.

They had some writers going out to the ranches, because cattle feed in many cases was brought in for milk production. Cattle were also imported. Hawaii didn't have milk cattle - it had some range cattle over on the Big Island, not on Oahu, and the range cattle didn't make bad beef, but Hawaii didn't have milk cattle. That was all brought from the mainland, and a lot of food had

LG: to be brought down too. For example, you had no barley, hay, oats or other feed like beet tops for the cattle.

So there was a big campaign there that the cattle were all being starved. Of course, the ranchers would give the newsmen the usual thing they wanted, "Yes, I only have about two days supply." Partly because they were also being ripped off by the ones who were importing the stuff, you see. They were being held up; all kinds of black market and racketeering including selling rice under the counter, as though there was a great shortage.

Then, that all the chickens were dying. I don't know, they found a couple of sick chickens to show to the newspapermen. Here we had announced time and time again that we were prepared to unload all perishables and essential food supplies; nobody would ever sit down and discuss it with us, you see.

Strike-Breaking Attempts

LG: Then they tried to bring in some strikebreakers to operate the ships. First, they started strictly on this business of unloading essential food supplies and they also got the thing covered with a legal fiction by going to court and getting an injunction against picketing; interfering with the people who were going down there to discharge these ships. In other words, they came in under a certain type of court protection.

I remember that the first group was led in there by a guy who had absolutely no interest in any of this; he was from a wealthy family, and his name was Kenji Kimble. His family owned the Halekulani Hotel, an old hotel that was near the Royal Hawaiian; it used to be a favorite stopping place for a number of people from the mainland. Kenji Kimble led this group through.

LG: I remember being down on the picket line with the guys when he was going through. I said, "Kenji, you'll never live it down." "You guys are trying to destroy the Islands," he said. I said, "You know that's bullshit." He says, "Well, we're going in." He was all cranked up, that's all. He wasn't that bad an egg, but just all wrapped up in this business; he was another self-appointed saviour of Hawaii, and they did unload the stuff, although -

Ward: Did Kimble himself work?

LG: I doubt it. He just led the group through there, you see.

Ward: But did he go down the hold and wrestle the . . .?

LG: (laughing) Probably no - he wouldn't go down there.

Ward: Because it's not easy work for a guy who is not used to it.

LG: No, it's not easy work. How they got on the ship, I'm not sure myself. I think the sailors had gotten off the ship. These were the beginnings of an attempt to run strikebreakers on.

Ward: What kind of men did they get? Racial? What? Mixed?

LG: They were local guys, mixed, but no Japanese among them. There were a number of hapahaoles, sort of Portuguese, English, Hawaii-English. No Japanese and I don't recall any Filipinos. Our guys were there to look at them very sharply to see who in the hell they were. They weren't workers that our people recognized, and they knew almost everybody in Hawaii.

Ward: There weren't very many of them?

LG: No - no, there was only a handful. That was their first effort, six or seven carloads of them, couldn't be more than about thirty men all together that went down there. It wasn't a big operation; only a few tons of the stuff, didn't amount to anything.

LG: We made all kinds of proposals but they were ignored. We said, "Okay, we'll work some of this stuff after it goes through a clearance committee, provided that whatever we pick up in the strike we'll get retroactively." Initially, our position had been that we'd work it if they paid us our demands, but the public relations issue was more important. We'd just get the job done. There were no takers.

Later on, the Territory got into the business. Governor Ingram Stainback was a real arch enemy of ours, an appointed governor, and he was vicious in all respects. He got into it up to his ears, including ramming Acts 2 and 3 through the Hawaii terrirorial legislature.

Under Acts 2 and 3, the Territory could go into the stevedoring business. The general idea was that they would pay the prevailing rate of pay and seize the stevedoring and shipping industry because of the essential needs of Hawaii. Then when the strike was over they would return the properties to the employers. As to where the workers came out when it was all over would be another story.

The hangovers of that legislation are still around; Senator (Daniel) Inouye is still pushing for this Hawaii Labor Protection Act which is in effect a federal provision to provide for seizure of the industry in the case of an offshore maritime strike that affects a place like Hawaii or Alaska.

Ward: I thought the legislature turned pretty good because of the political effect you'd had in the sugar strike before?

LG: It had been, up to that point.

Ward: It changed?

LG: It collapsed is more like it. One of the guys I remember, for example, was a very influential legislator. He was Speaker of the House, or something; he's not there anymore; we dumped him when he ran for Speaker - Vince Esposito.

LG: I recall him ducking us completely; he was against us. I'm trying to get across to you that there was a complete cleavage in the community, all the way from the legislature through the social structure; school teachers, businessmen, obviously the haoles and the Big Five, were all against us. Finding haole support was almost impossible.

Even some of the guys who had been very friendly to us, a guy like Canlis; he was all cranked up on the goddam thing; I recall a very bad argument with him where he kept telling me how we were wrecking Hawaii. So, I said, "Look, you're doing all right, aren't you?" "Sure, I'm doing very well." He had Canlis' Broiler, a fancy eating house, where none of us could afford to eat.

I said to him, "By the way, what did you do during the depression?" I'd heard somewhere that he had been on relief. He said, "Oh, I was broke, I was on relief like a lot of other people." "That's not unusual," I said, "So was I. Now, you're doing fairly well right now, aren't you?" He said, "Yeah."

I said, "Then, what the hell are you squawking about, just because somebody else is trying to do something for himself?" But you can't get anywhere with these people; this guy had become so identified with the employers down there; this is the way they felt, and he felt the same way.

Ward: So, you had no haole support at all?

LG: The nearest thing we came to some support was Paul Fagan, oddly enough. As I told you, I had met Paul Fagan earlier. I guess it was primarily during the wind-up of the '48 mainland strike in longshore, but the strike had been on only a week or so when the Lurline came in, as I told you, and Paul Fagan was on the Lurline.

I decided what was wrong with just going out and having a talk with him. I knew that Fagan was one of the big stockholders in Matson - he and Walter Buck. Later the two of them became

LG: extremely influential in resolving the strike. I guess they were the two largest minority stockholders; not agency stockholders as such. There were no majority stockholders in the true sense of the word because the ownership was divided by the Big Five in the main and Alexander Baldwin had a piece, Castle & Cooke had a piece, I know, and C. Brewer.

Well, anyway, I went out and gave Fagan the whole story of what had happened. I told him what we were asking for, including what I had told the employers and Hillenbrand off the record, that we would settle for 16 cents, even though it would still put us a long way from parity.

After he listened for a while, he said - he had some sort of funny way of computing what workers were entitled to, "What you're saying is, the way I figure things out, you're entitled to 18 cents." This was his own crazy mathematics, you see: "And what you're prepared to settle for is not too bad." I said, "Well, I thought you should have the facts, that's all." He said, "I want to make some phone calls, and I wish you would wait here." I think we were having something to eat in the kitchen. He went into another room and was gone a long, long time.

I found out later he had been talking to Sandy Walker of American Factors, one of the king-pins of the employers. He was the tough, tough guy in that whole structure. Fagan came back, completely crestfallen and he said, "Oh, there's no such thing as a settlement around." I said, "I didn't think so, I was just giving you the facts."

Later, Fagan and his wife became <u>personae non grata</u> in Hawaii. They spent a great deal of time down there and of course all their social life was with these same people. They were sort of isolated; that's how tight the community was, how strong the feelings were.

In the midst of the strike, I guess it was about three months old, there were a number of other things going on; one was an attempt to load the Matson ships with regular Hawaii supplies and everything else and bring the ships down . . . .

Ward: On the west coast?

LG: In San Francisco and of course our position was "no dice" unless there were certain foods and essentials and nothing else. We weren't going to see Matson start making a killing during the strike. And they went into court on an injunction and I think it was in front of (Federal Judge George) Harris again, though Harris was not at that time the judge on the Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt case.

I recall being subpoenaed. I was sitting in some ante-room where they keep witnesses and Sevier was there, you know, Randolph Sevier. Then I saw how deep the commitment was on the part of the employers; we were talking, a perfectly friendly conversation. I said, "Look, an injunction isn't going to do you much good."

Because what happened would be the longshoremen would be dispatched from the longshore hall; they would take the dispatch; they would go down to the ship, and for one reason or another, they would decide they wouldn't work. They would just say, "Forget it, I don't want the job." And nobody's going to work there. The feeling was strong on the coast; good solidarity.

I told Sevier, "You can't get members to work. We'll live up to an injunction, but there's nothing in the contract that says you can force a man to take a job. And you're not going to get anybody from the outside; I'll tell you that."

I'll be damned, Sevier goes before the judge and repeats the whole conversation, obviously figuring that the judge would take great umbrage at the whole thing. After all, this was an announcement by myself in advance that we're going to defy the injunction. But Harris kept his cool and said, "Well, I don't know what there is in the law that you can force somebody to work - as an individual."

They issued the injunction, but nothing came of it. We lowered the anchor on the strike on the west coast, so that in itself became an

LG: enormous handicap to any operations in Hawaii; but it did not stop them from every kind of an effort to bring cargo down there.

As I said, the Territory got in the act and passed Acts 2 and 3, and around that they formed a new stevedoring company. I forget what it was called - something like American Stevedoring Company - always "American" - and they made an effort to open up the waterfront and recruit men. There was quite a set-to in Honolulu. A beef broke out and some of the strikebreakers got hurt.

I remember some great oldtimers like Simeon Bagasol and others, loyal union members over the years. We defended them on attempts to deport them later, and he's still down there, I guess, unless he's retired. These guys made the clink; we had all these legal battles going on. There weren't that many attempts to break strike in the other ports.

Ward: This was in Honolulu?

LG: Honolulu, primarily.

Ward: This was the test, right there?

LG: Oh, sure - this was the real source of strength; it was a large group of stevedores, too.

Ward: How many strike-breaking attempts would you say there were?

LG: The principal strikebreaking attempts were the ones I mentioned to you by Kenji Kimble and on a more formal basis by the Territory. It gives you an idea of the power in a situation like that. This was not a good economic period in Hawaii; there was a fair amount of unemployment. People were told that unless they took these jobs they would be cut off relief or any Territorial help; really forced conscription in every sense of the word.

You think it would have ended there but it did not. There were still attempts to bring in strikebreakers and to man the ships. Somebody

LG: had reached a guy who turned traitor. He was a San Francisco longshoreman. His name was (Joseph) Maldonado.

Ward: Sounds like a Filipino?

LG: No, he wasn't - some sort of a combination origin of Spanish or Latin; he came down there all of a sudden, self-appointed; somebody paid his transportation and everything else. You could only reach one conclusion there. Suddenly he's getting all kinds of newspaper publicity. He is going to lead these longshoremen into the right kind of a union, and so forth and so on.

Ward: Where had he been on the west coast?

LG: San Francisco.

Ward: A member of Local 10?

LG: I think so, right. Handling him was no great headache. Here he was making all these statements: "I'm going to do this and the other thing." Finally, somebody got hold of him: "You don't have to be running around to the papers. The longshoremen are meeting on such and such a date and you're welcome to come to the meeting."

And he was just shot to ribbons by the membership. Most of them didn't do much talking. Just said, "Let him go, for Christ's sake, he's just an out and out fink." He was lucky to leave there, that's all. He came and left in a hurry. He just couldn't turn a goddam thing and that gives you an idea of the solidarity of the guys.

By that time I think the newspapers had overreached themselves, too. It had reached the stage where the guys would pick up the paper in the morning and start having fun with all those headlines. In a peculiar way, guys who've been kicked around for many, many years consider this stuff very flattering.

The most horrible thing about the place was that workers, particularly unionized workers, felt they were simply ignored. Bear in mind

LG: that the only time they get any kind of mention is when they go on strike. There's no mention of all their hard work at all; no mention of the times when they're in trouble.

And of course we pounded away at the usual thing; "Tell us the last time any one of these damn newspapers had any single kind word to say about any group of workers in any of their demands." They all knew about the 1946 strike, the 1947 beef and the '48 longshore strike, so that the educational process that goes on in a situation like that is unbelievable - very fast.

You get yourself a college education in a couple of months. So Maldonado died lousy; no big headache. What became much more of a headache was when the Territory decided to use the whole official machinery to literally bring to bear all the pressure of government on the longshoremen down there.

This took several forms - one was the indictment of Bridges, Robertson and Schmidt. Harry had finally gotten his citizenship after the war. You remember the Supreme Court decision that Justice (Frank) Murphy - I forget, was he ever Chief Justice?

Ward: No, Justice Murphy.

LG: But this is the one where Murphy wrote this famous decision that "this case will stand forever as a monument to man's inhumanity to man." After that Harry had gotten his citizenship. I was not in town when he went up for his swearing-in. The two people who were supposed to be there for the swearing-in ceremony were (Henry) Schmidt and (Paul) Schnur.

Ward: Some technicality on Schnur.

LG: Schnur was a naturalized citizen and didn't have his citizenship papers with him, so he stepped aside and Bob Robertson, who was born in this country, took his place. That was the extent of Bob Robertson's participation in this so-called conspiracy. The indictment against Bridges,

LG: Robertson and Schmidt was that they had conspired together to defraud the government. Defrauding the government took the form of Harry getting his citizenship, so they were participating in a fraud together with him - all of them equally guilty - whereby they deprived the government by helping obtain citizenship papers for Harry. Of course it was just a rejuvenation of all the old charges against Bridges on Communist party membership, and so forth and so on.

This indictment takes place right in the midst of the strike. Henry Schmidt is down in Hawaii at the time of the indictment and so he is served the papers there. Tom Clark was the attorney general of the United States at the time. He issued the gratuitous statement that this indictment ought to help clear up the situation in Hawaii - that blatant.

Then along comes Governor Stainback and he appoints a fact-finding board. The strike, by that time, was two or three months old. This fact finding board met at the old Iolani Palace. There were five as I recall on the panel. I think the chairman of the fact finding board was a man named James L. Coke, a retired justice of the Territorial Supreme Court. Another was a man named Harold S. Roberts from the university. He was a so-called expert on labor relations and as phony as a nine dollar bill.

The question was, do we take part in the hearing or not? I wouldn't say that there was agreement on the thing. Harry had some reservations on even taking any part in the hearing. I was down there and I felt that the hearing supplied a peculiar opportunity to really take on the employers on the whole background of the strike, so we decided to be present: Jack and myself and a delegation of longshoremen.

The lineup in that Iolani Palace - I guess it was their assembly chamber or their senate chamber - was all you had to see to understand what was going on. Sitting on our side were longshoremen and some other guys from the union, period. The other side had the most unbelievable

LG: array of anybody the employers could get. Here was the whole haole community lined up in phalanxes on the other side and with the employers supposedly there to present their side of the story. Well, we started off; the thing to do was to get rid of the fact finding board, and to do it publicly. In retrospect, I think it was correct. It finally worked out as we wanted it.

I started off by giving an opening presentation that went on for several hours, and if I've ever done a thorough job of summarizing a particular set of facts behind a strike on a sociological basis, it was in that hearing. I was getting to just one point, namely, that the employers had torpedoed the hearing before it started.

I went into the whole business about proposing arbitration; that as far as the employers were concerned they had announced in advance they would not arbitrate, so they were not bound by the fact-finding results at all. The only circumstances under which they would listen to the fact finding board, and they had already said so publicly, was "If the board comes along and says that the employers are right." There's one thing the employers will not do, and that is leave open this question of whether or not we close the gap and get equal pay for equal work.

Of course, I had to go back into the nature of industry, the nature of the work, the conditions of work. So, this became the nub of it. In advance, we said, "Look, this fact finding board will come along and it will support the employers fundamentally. They might give us a little more than two cents, but they are not going to close the gap. We are prepared to arbitrate how much the gap is closed; yes, even take our chances in arbitration on 'Should the gap be closed?' The employers have taken a flat position; they will not arbitrate."

It became a very tense hearing, extremely tense. At one point, we decided to take a recess and I just said, "We're taking a recess," and walked out with our guys; primarily to cool off a bit. I remember coming back and the judge

LG: saying, "Look, this is the same as a legal proceeding: if you want a recess, you can have it, but you have to ask permission of the court." I didn't think this was a court; it was a fact finding hearing, and if we wanted to caucus for a while, that was our business. But it was about as tight as any hearing could get to be.

Sure enough the fact finding board came along with a recommendation that the strike be settled based on 14 cents an hour. Our figuring was correct; they would never accede to the 15 or 16 cents, the one thing the board would never touch because the employers had announced in advance that if they did, the board was just dead.

I'm sure that this was understood by the government before the fact finding board was ever appointed; they all knew what the hell they were going to do. The board's decision was unanimous including this so-called friend of labor, Roberts. That ended his pretense of being like a friend.

But that was not the end - not the end. Along came a telegram from Washington, as I recall, Secretary of the Interior, whoever he was; President Truman sent a wire urging our acceptance; Joe Farrington, Governor Stainback, of course.

So, here was all this pressure from Washington, from the administrative end - not the legislative end - that we accept the fact finding report. And we decided, okay, we might as well go all the way on the thing. So, we had a special meeting of Longshore and the place was jammed. We met in some school; it was a compulsory membership meeting.

We even pulled the pickets off because we wanted everybody there. Oh, the place was just jammed and I called the governor's office and said, "Well, we read about the fact finding report. Is this going to be officially delivered to the union?" He said, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "Well, we're having a special meeting and we suggest your representatives be there." He said, "Fine." So, just as the meeting was started, in walk two people from the

LG: governor's office. And they give us the fact-finding report and were about to leave. I said, "No, I want to ask a favor." "What is that?" "I want you to stay for a little while because we plan to take a vote and would like you to stay here as official observers. That's how simple it is."

Well, they had not much choice. They couldn't very well give us the fact-finding report as the agents of the Territory and then walk away. I said, "No, stick around." Well, once again the broom brigade was outside, distributing leaflets urging the workers to get rid of these outsiders, this mainland leadership and the usual crap; do the right thing because after all this was their own territory; they lived in Hawaii and so forth and so on; and they ought to accept the fact-finding committee report.

By that time the longshoremen knew what the hearing was all about and there was no problem of defining the issues. So, here were these two territorial officers. I deliberately made my presentation extremely brief, not more than eight or ten minutes on the background and the fact-finding hearing.

Some of the guys said, "No need to vote." I said, "No, no, we're going to vote - it's better that we do. You've got these reporters outside, the women again - that's what they called themselves, 'We, the women' - the observers from the territorial office - we'll take a vote. And we're taking a secret ballot vote, too." We had the ballots all prepared - "yes" or "no".

We took the vote right there in front of the observers and made them stay while the count went on and the final vote was something like -

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The Ranks Hold Solid

Ward: Yes, the vote was 98 percent to reject.

LG: Right. So, I'd say in summary of that particular phase of the strike, we came out of it stronger.

Ward: What reaction did you get, if any, from the governor's men or his office?

LG: Oh, I don't think there was anything much left for them to say. Though we did ask them if they wanted to speak at the meeting or go into this fact finding report. They didn't take it on, saying that the report speaks for itself; they weren't in any position to elaborate on it. So, that ended that and the strike settled down again for another period.

Ward: How far out was it then - three or four months?

LG: About three or four months out. I'm trying to recall whether Acts 2 and 3 were passed by the territorial legislature before or after. It might have been after, partly an attempt by the government to take other steps to open up the waterfront. All these efforts were going on by some employers, although in the case of the west coast agreement an interesting thing happened.

One of the things that came out of the whole 1949 beef was an amendment to the Longshore agreement - because the '48 strike had fixed things on the west coast in fairly good shape - a provision in the contract that the west coast longshoremen did not have to handle cargo to or from another ILWU port, it would be like Hawaii or Alaska, where our members were on strike; a feature of the contract that was added primarily as a result of that Hawaii beef.

The strike settled down a bit after that and somewhere in there I went to this meeting in France of the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) in 1949 in Marseille.

LG: But the longshore strike continued; by that time a lot of the focus was on Washington, inasmuch as the government had gotten in the act, as well as the Territory. Bear in mind, the employers' attitude even in fact-finding was that they wouldn't be bound, because it was only fact-finding, but neither would they arbitrate; so that the secondary theme going all through the strike was the demand for arbitration. It finally jelled in some sessions in Washington, D. C.

Harry went back for those. Harry had been down in Hawaii during the strike.

Ward: I was going to ask what role he played.

LG: He played a very significant role at one stage of the game; they had gotten some anti-picketing injunctions by the court or something, or it might have been under Acts 2 and 3, I'm not sure. Harry came down there and he got hold of Art Rutledge of the Teamsters and convinced him that what was going on was just straight union busting and if we didn't win the '49 strike, the whole labor movement down there would take a very bad setback.

Anyway, Rutledge, whether it was partially to needle Jack Hall - because he and Jack didn't get along, or because Harry actually got to a tender spot in him - either way, he and Harry turned up on the picket line together.

Ward: Rutledge and Harry?

LG: Yes, defying the anti-picketing ordinance down there. The morale factor was important. He played a very important role in making sure that we dropped the anchor on the west coast, so they couldn't move cargo from this end. These were very important factors, and later on towards the windup of the strike, he again played a very important role.

Ward: There was, however, a slight disagreement on what to do about the fact-finding committee, wasn't there?

LG: Yes. Harry's idea was that we should have walked away from it. I don't recall his objecting particularly to the decision we had made because the primary responsibility there was Jack's and my own.

Ward: You were the front troops and . . . . ?

LG: Yes, Jack and I made the main decisions, right. I knew the guys down there and the committee. The '49 strike was very crucial in terms of the whole turn of Hawaii. If we lost it, I'm not saying we would have lost what we had in pineapple or in sugar, but we would have taken a very serious setback in terms of our whole relationship of forces in the Islands. If we won it, we would have made up the ground we lost in the '47 pineapple beef and we would be pretty thoroughly entrenched.

Ward: You were saying that things in Washington were becoming the focal point -

LG: Because of the developments; Harry went back there. Blaisdell was called back there for the Employers Council and I think Cyrus Ching was there, Secretary of Labor at the time. Harry, in a hearing of that sort, would have everything right at his fingertips, so that a lot of the same information was just pounded home again, particularly the arbitration issue.

The man who came out very strongly for arbitration was Wayne Morse. The Administration had already gone on record for us to accept the fact-finding report. What Harry was hammering away at, though, was that there was no solution in sight unless there was arbitration. And Morse began to pick up more and more weight, enough so that even the Honolulu Star-Bulletin had to carry these stories and give them some credence.

Well, by that time the strike must have been a good five months old and pretty soon it became evident that there would have to be some sort of break in the employer ranks. We were hearing about, oh, guys like Walter Buck who was a very big stockholder, perhaps the largest one, and Paul Fagan and Matson.

LG: Fagan was getting fed up with the whole scene - he wanted to bring it to a head, and I recall Walter Buck coming down to Hawaii. Harry was there and meeting with us. Steele was about to take over as president of the Employers' Council. Steele came by the office and it was a very abrasive session. He was particularly angry with me, I guess because the employers were getting no place.

I said, "Tough luck, you know what the demands are, it's not all that complicated." See, one of the difficulties is that when there's a wages-only strike, it's all you have to talk about too. You're not talking about anything else and you can't trade off one item for another, take a little bit less on this and defer that and so forth.

I think it was at that session where I checked out the idea; "I know how badly you guys are hung up on this 14 cents; it might have to be a two-step affair. But it has to be within the contract year to coincide with the west coast agreement. There may have to be two steps to close the gap."

I'm sure he picked that up, for later on there were indications that there would be some more money around; I think it went to 19, then 20, then 21 in total. I recall a session with Walter Buck; he wanted to make sure the settlement went through. There was a sort of general agreement that it would be 21 cents (14 and 7) and obviously the employer ranks were badly split.

Buck announced the thing is settled, period. Harry did the same thing. There was a split in the employers' ranks and within a day or so, the thing settled; 21 cents is what it amounted to; instead of getting parity over 32 years, within a couple of years we had parity in wages. Which they still have, they automatically get parity.

Negotiations are going on in Hawaii right now, but not over the question of wages - they will pick up what the west coast longshoremen get; they have the same basic hourly rate. The place where there is a difference is on the number of hours. In other words, they work an eight hour day and

LG: here we get overtime after six, which results in a higher wage scale for the day, because on the west coast they get 9 hours pay for 8 hours work. Over there they get 8 hours pay for 8 hours work. The important thing is that we did break through and get parity and the strike was won.

Ward: That was quite a struggle.

LG: Yep. One little item. You recall that one of the major campaigns on the part of the employers was the food shortage. I say the only real shortage that might have occurred during the course of the strike - there was enough food - there might have been a shortage of cocktail napkins and of martini olives. That might have occurred.

Ward: No shortage of gin?

LG: No - everybody apparently had stocked up on that. Bear in mind, that any time there was a rumble down there of a possible longshore strike, the salesmen had themselves a picnic; they sold everything they had on hand or anything that could be delivered. They were yelling about the rice shortage, when they were peddling rice under the counter, and charging exorbitant prices.

There was a warehouse fire in the Kakaako district - the Kakaako district is a pretty run down section, close to Honolulu - it's on Ala Moana. It used to be a very rough section of town and there were a number of broken down warehouses. I got a call from someone from a newspaper who said, "You know, you better get somebody over to that damn fire." "What fire?", I said. He mentioned where it was and said, "Look, you'll find out something." So, we got somebody over there; this warehouse was on fire and it was packed with rice. So, naturally, we did quite a bit with that; the papers did too, on the so-called shortage of food. On a number of occasions, we printed full page ads ourselves. That was the time we took this ad against the Elks Club.

Ward: Were you ever refused to run an ad?

LG: No, they took the ads all right. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin would take them; while they weren't pro-strike at all, they were sort of riding it out a bit better. I think Farrington wanted to stay friends with us; he figured there was going to be statehood one of these days.

There's one thing at least about that strike; the newspaper records are very complete. The fact-finding hearing is . . . .

Ward: It's all in the ILWU library?

LG: It's all in transcript and our presentation I know we have in the library, and maybe the whole fact-finding hearing. Probably is. The hearings in Washington - they'll be around. The only things that are missing, really, are some of the details of the negotiations where you don't keep perhaps as complete a record.

(Interview 21: 10 August, 1978)

A Rift In The Leadership?

Ward: Lou, there's some indication that questions arose about Harry Bridges coming over to Hawaii during the 1949 strike, particularly with Jack Hall. Jack is quoted in one source as asking Harry not to come. Would you care to comment on that?

LG: It could very well have happened, although I guess I didn't pay a lot of attention to it. I knew that Jack had some feelings which might not have been directly related to the '49 strike. Now, the conversation he might have had with Harry - I know he spoke with him on the phone. It might have been after the BRS (Bridges-Robertson-Schmidt) indictment. I guess you noted in the record on the '49 strike, there's reference there to a phone call from Jack saying that it would just stir up a lot of hysteria and sort of take things off the Longshore issue.

LG: This might have been at the back of his mind. I know I had no great concern about that. Henry Schmidt, who was down there at the time, was one of those indicted. I never noted anything which indicated any feeling on the part of the longshoremen or of Jack about Henry Schmidt's presence. Quite the contrary.

Ward: There was enough redbaiting as it was.

LG: They couldn't turn any more stops, for god's sake. There were only so many adjectives in the English language that had been used; the papers down there, with their missionary backgrounds, were not going to include the four-letter words, and now the Supreme Court has barred seven of them. So, as to whether they could have intensified their redbaiting any more, I don't know.

The only thing that might be of any relevance is in the field of speculation, because obviously Harry's presence and participation in the strike was important. It was important from the point of view of a very basic economic element of the strike. We had lowered the anchor on that strike by tying up any ships or handling of ships to the west coast. That was the key.

For example, during the longshore strike in Hawaii over 400,000 tons of sugar backed up within a short while, because the longshore strike coincided with the peak of the grinding season in sugar. The primary and almost sole outlet for Hawaiian sugar is C&H (California and Hawaiian). The longshoremen who worked the bulk sugar stations in Hawaii were on strike, so that was shut down.

I think the employers also realized that any major attempt to move the sugar would have backed right up to the sugar plantations. Those guys were strong enough and tough enough that if there had been any attempt to move sugar and it looked as though the longshoremen were endangered, the sugar plantations would have walked. And if they had walked of course the strike would have spread.

LG: Oh, I know there would have been all kinds of injunctions; you're not going to drive people back to work with a piece of paper, and any chance of breaking the sugar union internally, particularly after the '48 experience, was pretty minimal. As a matter of fact, that 400,000 tons of sugar that piled up became a peculiar element in longshore negotiations a couple of years later when we negotiated the first pension plan in Hawaii.

After we negotiated the complete plan, the employers insisted on making it an insured plan instead of a trusteed plan. I didn't see any particular advantage to the thing, although each of the agencies was also a general agent for some insurance company like Prudential, Hancock and so forth. So, maybe they made a buck in that direction.

But the overall benefits of a self-administered plan were just too obvious, particularly by the time this thing came on deck in Hawaii; we had just negotiated our first pension plan on the mainland for the longshoremen.

Where the 400,000 tons of sugar comes along, we found out shortly after the strike was over that the Hawaii people, inasmuch as they couldn't get the ready cash, got an advance for the sugar from the insurance company. That's where they made their loan.

I think when it came to the pension plan, the quid pro quo for the consideration given Hawaii by the big insurance companies was to go for insured plans. That became a story by itself, because we even had to get the insurance companies to change their basic rules about the thing they were trying to peddle us because they thought they had an inside track . . . .

Ward: That was a couple of years later?

LG: That was a couple of years later, so there is no doubt what impact was had. Now, the other element that could have been involved in Jack's consideration is that somewhere along the line after the '47 pineapple beef, Jack had picked up word from

LG: some of the contacts he had in the industry that the strike could have been won. Jack had very strong friends as well as strong enemies. Governor Stainback, at the mention of Jack, would jump right out of his skin, out from under his wig! On the other hand, Jack became and remained a close friend all of his life with Jack Burns. Jack Burns had been a police chief in Honolulu. Later on he became the delegate to Congress. He was the one who really bit the bullet and made the hard decision to allow Alaska statehood to have priority over Hawaii, even though Alaska was much smaller and had never had a campaign equal to the one in Hawaii for statehood.

His reasoning was that the main arguments really against Hawaii statehood - these later promoted by people like Senator Eastland when he conducted the un-American Activities hearings down in Hawaii; when we had the reluctant 39 - were predicated around, not just the Red scare, but that you had all of these people of Japanese ancestry and so forth; so that this wasn't really a typical American state.

Burns' was a very risky decision; gambled his political future on the thing. In his first gubernatorial campaign the election was stolen from him, not by the people locally but by (then Senator) John Kennedy, one of Burns' oldest friends.

Ward: That's one you commented upon - we'll cover that a little later.

LG: Burns was a damn good man, so I'm just talking a bit here about Burns because of his personal ties to Jack (Hall). I doubt if there ever was a formal agreement or a single thing put in writing or even a shake hands understanding between him and Jack Burns. They were close on a personal basis even though Burns lived a very different life than Jack.

He was a complete teetotaler. I think he had been a heavy drinker at one time, very ardent Catholic, made Mass every morning. Another friend

LG: Jack Hall had - and this gets back to the same phone call from Bridges because one thing triggered so many others - was a man named C.C. Cadagan.

Cadigan had been the head of Hawaiian Pineapple Company and he was still the head of Hawaiian Pineapple Company when we had a major strike there, that's a little bit later on - 1951 - on the island of Lanai. It could be that Jack picked this up from Cadigan or from somebody else in the industry.

Another guy that Jack was quite close to in the industry, a man with whom I got to be close friends later on was Jack Driver. He wasn't an employer really. He was the head of Cal Pack (California Packing Corporation) operations down there. He knew agriculture; he knew the cannery down there. I really had quite a fondness for him. He was quite a decent guy and so was his wife.

As a matter of fact, I'd go by to meet them both, have dinner with them. Jack knew Driver well. I can't put my finger on it because I really don't know, but I do know that Jack made comments several times, oh, a year after the 1947 pineapple beef, that if the pineapple workers had not gone back and had held out for about another two weeks the strike could have been won.

Ward: And do you think that Harry was in any way to blame for not holding out?

LG: I don't know. I really wouldn't blame it on Harry because . . . .

Ward: Do you think Hall blamed Harry?

LG: He might have. On the other hand, you don't make an estimate like the one made in 1947 upon what you think might happen in the employer ranks. You make the decision based on where your own strength lies; whether you think you can hang on to a particular situation. Did the union make mistakes and are you better off to retreat and keep your army intact than to go down with flags flying.

It could very well be that these remarks made by the employers gave Jack a certain amount of second thoughts. I think mistakes were made in

LG: terms of a premature strike. I don't think an adequate job had been done with the seasonal workers or an attempt to reach them. Sure the balance of the workers in pineapple were strong, the field workers. An attempt to load pineapple, for example, on some barges to ship from Lanai to the canneries in Honolulu brought on a big riot there; guys were arrested. On the other hand, it's equally true that any attempt on the part of the company to operate, the fundamental part of that whole pineapple operation, namely, to harvest, couldn't have worked out. They didn't have the work force and I don't know where the hell they would have gotten them.

But these things are of course all in retrospect. The point does remain that when it came to the canneries, there was a large scale attempt by the employers to operate in the field. On that score a strike in the off season would have been better than the peak season because there your army is intact; you are not speculating about others.

The decisions were made at that time. As to some of the things that Jack picked up later - about a year after the strike - he was pretty well convinced that it could have been won. It straightened out later on but it took about four years; until the Lanai beef. That could very well have been one of the reasons why Jack told Harry, "Look, perhaps you're better off not coming down here."

Ward: Well, at any rate, he came and the strike was won, finally.

LG: Yes, the strike was won many months later.

Ward: I gather also that in the final days of the '49 strike Harry played quite a role.

LG: Yeah, when it came to the last part of the thing, particularly dealing with people like Walter Buck, who had decided in effect to move on his own. Buck was that kind of a guy, a very tough guy. A very hard-headed business man, the head of I don't know how many corporations. I mean, his time must

LG: have been peculiarly divided between being director of so many corporations; he owned this American Distilling plant that used to be over in Sausalito.

Ward: Oh, sure -

LG: I thought it was a conspiracy to poison a lot of people, but it wasn't. Just to make money. Harry spent some time with him. We were meeting at the Niumalu Hotel late in '49 and the World Series was on because I walked away from the table for a while to listen to the World Series. Buck was very offended - heck, you don't go listen to the World Series when you're having a business conversation.

So, Harry played a role there. When he went back to Washington, particularly on the arbitration issue, his relations with Senator Morse were very good. He played an important role when Blaisdell was back there. Blaisdell came back sort of cut and bleeding, because by that time a lot of people in Washington were pretty outspoken about what they thought of the Hawaii employers. Our publicity about the wage differential, the issue of arbitration, had gotten to Washington.

Ward: A writer I've been reading quotes Dwight Steele as telling about some social contacts that Harry made that didn't hurt at all. He describes a scene at Mrs. Walter Dillingham's suite in some fancy penthouse in San Francisco, where she had gotten a lot of the Big Five people and their cohorts to meet Harry and he held forth on the sea voyages the Polynesians made to colonize Hawaii --

LG: Yeah, Harry knew a fair amount of these sea legends. One of the things that impressed me was that these Hawaiians had navigated enormous stretches of open water, and I was always wondering how the devil they could do it. Hawaii must have been somewhat fortuitous on their part because there is no indication that there were inhabitants there before Polynesians got there.

Ward: I don't think there was an awful lot of animal life either.

LG: No - no, as a matter of fact, things like pigs and chickens were brought in by the Polynesians. They were good sailors and they sailed these very large outrigger canoes that could hold 60, 70 people; later on, they did their navigation by fixed star.

Anyway, Harry knew quite a bit about it; he had gone to sea and had sailed before the mast around Tasmania and that country. I'd hold a lot of credence in Steele's story, and Harry could be very charming. When he decided to spin some of these old yarns, he could do a very good job. And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the session took place, because following the '48 longshore beef there were all sorts of fragmentations among the employers.

I mentioned seeing Paul Fagan very often; later, through him, meeting Walter Buck; Paul Fagan's rather hilarious attempt to make me respectable by taking me down to the San Francisco Stock Exchange Club for lunch, you see. And I thought it was funnier than anything else; obviously not my dish to tea.

Ward: Well, I think that about winds up all the questions I have on the '49 longshore strike.

LG: There's a great deal more to it of course, the attempts to man some of these ships by the SUP, and what they called the "clothes line fleet" that came in there with barges which helped relieve some of the pressure on supplies - things that went on - but these are all - - -

Ward: Sidelines. We'll never get through if we take all the sidelines. Some time ago you made a list of things that happened in '49 and we decided to take the Hawaii longshore strike first. We fairly well disposed of that - what's next on the list?

XIV ZERO SPELLS SUCCESS

"No Stoop, No Squat, No Squint"

LG: I might have to go back here for a second. I'll tell you why. I don't think there's any way of understanding this whole period, '47 - '48 - '49 - '50 - '51, and later on to really extend it for a couple more years because the BRS case was hanging in the Supreme Court and there was also the Smith Act indictment of Jack Hall. I don't think there's any way of getting a full grasp of this without hitting some of the highlights to try to make a recap of some of the things that went on.

Ward: All right, go ahead.

LG: It was a period of at least five years and became something like seven years; never a day without a crisis.

Ward: Now, in those very years, after '48, the west coast longshore situation was pretty well jelled, wasn't it? Straightened out?

LG: Well, just because it was straightened out did not end the fight. In other words, it was a fight where you might win on one salient and it promptly broke out somewhere else. It started with the Cold War, of course. The Cold War, the hardening of the situation in the CIO, the passage of Taft-Hartley in 1947, the battles that started over the Taft-Hartley affidavits.

LG: Many of us, of course, held out against the whole Taft-Hartley Act; in other words, our refusal to go along with its rules. We went into some very rough periods as a result, but something else happened. The bulk of the labor movement turned tail; they signed. Not only signed but began to use the Taft-Hartley and National Labor Relations Acts to strengthen and fortify their raids against the ILWU, and to move against the other unions that had been expelled.

A Heave-Ho To The "Final Offer"

LG: As a matter of fact, the first Taft-Hartley test took place in the longshore strike in '48, that we didn't cover when we talked about that strike. One provision of the Taft-Hartley Act was for a so-called last offer by the employers.

A vote was to be taken by the workers on this last offer, and this included the 80-day cooling off period. The 80-day period was a basic device of Taft-Hartley to force the postponement of a strike. At the tail end of the postponement there would be some sort of a fact-finding hearing and the employers would then make a last offer; the workers supposedly were to vote on this.

Well, they invoked the 80-day injunction. The '48 strike did not take place on the expiration date of the agreement. It took place later because the injunction was invoked. Well, two things happened during the period of that injunction. One, was what the longshoremen themselves did under the leadership of the union and the other what happened to the last offer. There were no more last offers; those things have died, even though they invoke Taft-Hartley.

The first thing that happened after the injunction was invoked was "working by rules" as some unions call it in Europe. Call it anything

LG: you want. I was glancing over a book on the Wobblies in the United States while Terry and I were in the mountains this last weekend, and many of these things were Wobbly tactics.

For instance, when the Wobblies spoke of sabotage - which is badly interpreted in American history - they did not talk necessarily of wrecking machines and so forth. I found out something interesting. During all this period when the Wobblies talked of sabotaging - the black cat symbolized that, and the wooden shoe, the sabot - there had never been a single indictment or conviction of the Wobblies on sabotage.

Ward: I didn't know that.

LG: But they included, for example, staying on the job and doing a couple of things. One was that they suddenly became very inexperienced workers, they did not quite know how to do the job; always did it wrong and made mistakes. Another thing was just plain working slowly or as little as possible. Of course, there has been a long background of experience on the west coast. But of course the working class invents its own tactics, and many of them have been repeated.

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Ward: Some of these tactics that were used during the 80 days cooling off period imposed by Taft-Hartley - you were discussing these?

LG: Yes. One of the TV companies that had just come on the market was using the sales pitch of "No stoop, no squat, no squint." Pretty soon stickers with that pitch were turning up on the waterfront and the guys took it literally, "No stoop, no squat, no squint." Work didn't move very fast. In many respects I'd say the guys were cutting output by, oh, somewhere between 60 and 75 percent, and drawing full pay.

I'd say that some of these stevedoring companies, by the time the cooling off period was over, damn near welcomed the strike and said,

LG: "Okay, if that's what they're going to do, let them walk out; that's cheaper than meeting the payroll."

All the way up and down the coast, there was this long, deliberate slowdown; the guys simply were not happy working with the injunction; in part they were out to prove that even if a bunch of characters in Washington go ahead and issue injunctions and figure you're going to work, it won't really hold water.

Not too different from some of the statements made by John L. Lewis. Remember, when an injunction was threatened in the coal mines he made that famous statement, "Look, you can't mine coal with bayonets." The longshoremen were the same: you can't work cargo with injunctions.

So, that was the first thing that happened. Secondly, when the employers came along with their so-called "final offer" - that was the pay-off as far as the men were concerned. I don't think it would have mattered one damn bit what the employers offered. Obviously they were not going to offer a contract that was anywhere close to acceptable.

Ward: That was the one where not a single vote was cast?

LG: Right. I forget the total number of workers eligible at the time. I think it was somewhere between 22,000 and 23,000. The document issued finally by the National Labor Relations Board is a classic. They had to put out a final tabulation; they listed first the total number of eligible voters. These polling places were opened up in every port - up and down the coast - and I think in most places we had an observer there, just standing there, that's all.

They issued this report: for the employers' last offer: zero; against the last offer: zero; total number of votes cast: zero. Not a single vote. Now, that was a tremendously bold strike, by the way. It was Harry's idea, and a good one.

LG: I'm sure it shook up some of the members of the old Waterfront Employers Association. Somebody must have gotten the message that things were being handled all wrong if you thought you were going to ram these things down a group of aggressive and militant workers' necks. In some ways we had certain advantages - the war was over by that time and that made a difference.

Ward: The Cold War was on?

LG: The Cold War was on, but it did not have the same impact as the war period where John L. Lewis ran into this whole injunction business. This was no business of saying, "Okay, fellows, we gotta do this," and then winking. These things were just done straight out - "We don't like the injunction."

Oh, the union never went around saying, "Look, we're responsible for the slowdown." We just made the statement, time and time again, "The men just are not happy with this damn thing and they're not working under any goddam slave labor act." This phraseology was used constantly. Neither were we signing the Taft-Hartley affidavits.

So, these things have to be mentioned in terms of Longshore because again it shows the way another plot of this whole cabal against us had moved into place; the demand for the control of the hiring hall, the refusal to deal with this leftwing, rebel leadership. The offer we once made to the employers, "Okay, fine, we'll give you a rank and file committee," which they were not too happy about.

This thing began to come into focus: the role of the CIO where Almon Roth and those guys tried to move in. It must have been during those negotiations that Alan Heywood had come out - and, of course, the ACTU was in action.

The CIO had not yet come out with an all-out onslaught against the ILWU. They were playing this other tactic at the time, but come 1949,

LG: they were directly in the act too. They were in the act directly and indirectly in 1948 with this proposition by Roth that the CIO . . .

Ward: Yes, we went into that. I'm interested in what the CIO did about the Hawaii longshore strike in 1949, if anything?

LG: Damn little.

Ward: What did they do in '50 that bothered you?

LG: They had the Blue Card raid, as they called it - an attempt to break Local 6 and take it over. It was in '50 when they expelled us. Coast Guard screening took place in 1950 - this was imposed during the Korean War.

The famous Coos Bay caucus took place at that time; Harry was put in jail for about three weeks when the judge - I think it was Judge Harris - said, "There's no room for minority opinion," because of the Korean War. Later on came this classic decision by which Harry was released, and I'm trying to recall which of the judges issued the statement that in a time like the Korean War justice had to "set its face like flint against a storm."

These battles were going on at the same time. There was a stormy Local 6 convention and the walk-out by some of the business agents who went over the hill and joined the Teamsters. This was going on in 1950, you see. The Coast Guard screening was particularly important because the life of our progressive union rotated around the fight on this issue and the manner in which it was handled.

Then the '49 warehouse strike took place, or started, toward the tail end of the Hawaii strike and wound up, I think, a bit after. Again the employers figured that we couldn't win a two-front war.

Then we were in a defensive position in '51. The Hawaii ILWU convention was crucial, particularly because of the Korean issue. A decision had to be made about pulling in our lines organizationally because of all the harassment going on.

Ward: Particularly in the mid-west?

LG: And the south, right. The strike we had in Hawaii on Lanai, the strike that went on for almost seven months. Again, the government played some peculiar roles, and particularly some individuals who had been tied up with the un-American Activities Committee in Hawaii; a guy by the name of Ronald Jamieson, some sort of a two-bit judge. I think he later flipped his lid.

This went on through all of 1951, you see; by that time we had been eased out of the CIO and a number of the unions were going under, as you recall; attacks not just against us, but also outfits like UE (United Electrical Workers) and what have you. In '52 we still had the same headaches around; the BRS case was on appeal; there was a move on the Marine Cooks and Stewards by Lundeberg with the help of the employers.

It wasn't until '53 when we got the Supreme Court decision on the Bridges case, at which point the government promptly announced he was being tried in a civil case to deprive him of his citizenship. There was the trial before Judge Goodman; that victory cleaned up the cases against Harry.

Then there was the Hawaiian Smith Act case that took place just in the midst of sugar negotiations down there, when Jack and six others were indicted by the government. It went on, not for five years but more like seven. I'm just sort of trying to hit those highlights.

Dangers Abroad

Ward: There's one highlight you missed - your adventures in England.

LG: Yes.

Ward: That occurred in 1949, didn't it? Let's talk about that for a minute and then we'll go back to some of the other things later.

LG: Okay. The exact date in 1949, I'm not sure, but it must have been around July or August. We'd been invited to take part in the maritime conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions and even though we had been taking a lot of buffeting, we still thought that perhaps we could affiliate with the WFTU; so two of us went on behalf of the International to attend the WFTU meeting in Marseilles. Harry would have gone had it not been for the indictment that was kicking around.

Ward: Who went with you?

LG: Johnny Meletta; he had been a union official up in Seattle; a very good man, a business agent. Johnny is dead now. Had cancer and died. Anyway he was a tough, little Italian guy and honest as the day is long. Well, I had always been curious about international contact, though in the main my contact had been with trade unions and workers in Mexico.

Ward: You and Toledano got to be . . . ?

LG: Quite close friends, yes, and as a matter of fact, I got to see him almost every time I went down there. I think the first time I met him was when I was state secretary of the CIO.

Ward: Yes, on the fishing problem.

LG: Yes, tuna fishing. And in 1948, I had been down to a meeting of the CTAL (Confederacion de Trabajadores Americas-Latinas), the Latin American trade union federation of which Lombardo was the head. The Cold War was already beginning to have its impact there; well, not enough to completely disrupt the CTAL operation, but it had its headache. During that meeting of the CTAL in Mexico City, Terry and I met Louis Saillant, the general secretary of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Ward: S A I L L A N T -

LG: Right. Louis Saillant was quite an interesting character. He had fought with the underground in France, all during the war. Really, a fine guy. Later on, I think, the organization began to get so politically dominated that it lost some of its trade union feel.

Oh, just one interesting story about that CTAL convention. One of the unions very active in the CTAL was the Oil Workers Union, which at the time was living under the traditions of Lazaro Cardenas. He was still alive and a good friend of Lombardo's and of Alejandro Carillo, who later became the governor of Mexico City, D.F.

We had gotten to know them when they were up here for the CIO Convention in 1939; Alejandro Carillo and his wife stayed at our house. We were living on Telegraph Hill at the time and he spoke impeccable English and he was here as a friend of Lombardo's and to translate for him.

So, after the meeting in Mexico City, the Oil Workers invited Terry and myself to take a trip with them by bus to inspect the new pipeline that was being built to bring oil from Tampico and Tuspan on the Gulf into Mexico City. It was a fascinating journey on several scores. The guys brought along some brandy, which was really the only thing that helped. The heat was unbelievable in the valley of Mexico.

We stopped at a place where the guys were installing a pipeline, including a lot of welders. We're walking along and one guy lifts his mask up and says, "Hiya, Lou, I haven't seen you for a while." Here's a guy I had known in Oakland in the '36 warehouse strike; we got to be good friends. He was a hell of a good picket captain. I asked him, "What the hell are you doing here?"

He says, "Well, I don't think you knew too much about my problem, but I couldn't save a goddam nickel. Here, I've got an arrangement;

Mexico City, 1948 Confederación de Trabajadores Américas-Latinas (CTAL). Left to right: William Lawrence of Local 13, San Pedro; Louis Goldblatt, secretary-treasurer, ILWU; Louis Saillant, secretary, World Federation of Trade Unions; Lombardo Toledano, president, CTAL.

Louis Goldblatt speaking to ILWU Local 6, regular meeting, in Civic Center Auditorium, San Francisco, 1948.

LG: I'm working seven days a week, practically, sometimes six. Every two weeks they give me enough money to go into town and have myself a party, drink it up and go broke. All the other money goes directly home to the bank. At least when I get through here, I'll have a stake." So, here he was in the Valley of Mexico where they don't even speak Spanish; only the Indian dialect, Nahatl.

So, we leave there and start wandering down the side of the cordillero, I guess it is, an extension of the Rockies down to the flatlands where you get to Poza Rico. The engineer was taking us around. It was a very new pumping station - it looked new and obviously quite modern. The engineer spoke excellent English and while telling us about the installation, he kept looking at me.

Finally he said, "Didn't you go to Cal?" I said, "Yes, I was there from 1931 to 1933." He said, "Yeah, I used to hear you speak at Sather Gate; so at least here I have a chance to carry out some of those ideas!" He was a strong Cardenas man and he showed us through a new housing project that they had built for the workers. And an older guy walked up to me and said, "I met you too, in San Francisco; I belonged to the Alaska Cannery Workers " - which we had chartered.

The Alaska Cannery Workers was led by a man named George Wolff, a colorful character - great raconteur, story teller, tap dancer. They used to meet in an old place in the Barbary Coast (a former red-light district of San Francisco) - place called Spider Kelley's. You'd walk in and it was like a meeting of the League of Nations of workers - every nationality. George Wolff boasted at one time that if there was a nationality in San Francisco that wasn't in that union, there was some mistake. All the naked women painted on the walls and so forth - the guys paid no attention - that was the headquarters of the Alaska Cannery Workers.

LG: Anyway, this is all within one trip, and we spent a little time in Tuspan and Tampico. I had to get back in a hurry because I picked up some amoebic dysentery. That was the last time I ate any raw oysters that had been picked in the Gulf of Mexico. So, I tried to keep up with developments in the CTAL and through them, of course, I began to pick up quite a bit on developments in the WFTU. For a while I was getting CTAL publications in Spanish, and I got the WFTU publications in Spanish too. While I couldn't understand all of it, I could pretty well get the drift of what was going on.

So, Johnny Meletta and I went to Marseilles. It was just blazing hot. It might have been early September; the weather was ferocious and the place where we met in Marseilles was not too well ventilated. There were a number of guys there. The French, of course, were very strong in the meeting. The Russians were there.

Ward: Chinese?

LG: No, this was 1949. The Chinese, I think, were pretty well occupied in a small domestic problem of their own (the Maoist revolution). They were also denied visas by the French. The Italians, of course, were there. I met a number of them from both the docks and the seamen.

Ward: DiVittorio, was he there?

LG: No, let's see - DiVittorio was not there, this was a meeting for the maritime workers. We met him in San Francisco when he came here. As a matter of fact, Terry and I later met his wife again, in Rome.

Ward: Well, when you met them in San Francisco in 1945 at the United Nations, Angela was his wife's interpreter, that's the only time he was in San Francisco.

LG: Yes, I guess that's right because he hadn't been out of jail too long - he was released in 1945. People were at the Marseilles meeting from the

LG: headquarters of the WFTU; some of the department heads, as they call them, and staff people like Louis Saillant, a couple of other assistants, and some translators. The meeting went fairly well.

We suggested that they call it the Maritime Federation of the World; the name already had some significance. Better than just giving it one of these departmental names. Later on, they changed it to the Port, Dock and Fisheries - Dock Workers - something like that, representing trade departments of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

As a matter of fact, the Canadian seamen were present at that meeting. I'm trying to remember the chap's name; he was a leftwinger and he was the head of the Canadian Seamen's Union, which had gone on strike. The reason for the strike was an attempt on the part of the Canadian stevedoring and shipping companies to break the union's back, which they finally did with the help of a guy named Hal Banks.

Banks was a member of the Seafarers International Union in the States. He was a tough egg and he had been assigned up there. He became the self-appointed savior of the Canadian shipping industry and his main double cross was to break the Canadian Seamens' Union and take it over. He did it so successfully that eventually the whole Canadian fleet was driven out of business, with a lot of racketeering and everything else.

I think that the findings made by a special Royal commission in Canada called for his indictment on an unlimited number of charges. He took a hike back to the U. S., and with a lot of political drag was never extradited. Somewhere along the line I picked up the information that he was living in San Francisco or hereabouts. But the Canadian seamen had been forced to strike.

What happened there is that some of the ships were being sailed with the help of Banks and other strikebreakers. The guy who was head of the

LG: Canadian seamen's union spent a good deal of time in Great Britain, with the result that these Canadian ships when they got to Great Britain were declared "black" - struck by the Canadian seamen - and the longshoremen refused to work them.

This was not the official position of the TUC (Trade Union Congress) in Great Britain, of its leader, Sir Walter Citrine. The Labor government was in power, with Clement Atlee as premier, and they went on an all-out campaign to break the longshore stoppage. As a matter of fact, Atlee just lost his cool completely - flipped his lid.

But back again to the Marseille meeting for a minute; the reason I recall it being so hot is that finally they decided to take an afternoon off and they had a couple of buses. We went down to some little spot on the Mediterranean and we all went swimming. Most of us had no suits, of course, but at least we cooled off. It was a very pleasant little outing and we went into some little place where they prepared lunch and I stopped by the bar to have a Pernod with Johnny Meletta.

We sit down at the bar there and some guy sits down and says, "Gee, good to see you again, Lou." And here - it's funny how these things happen in trips around the world; I'm convinced there's an international fraternity. Here was a guy who also had been through some of the strikes in the thirties and I asked him what he was doing there and he said that well, he had been running arms for Israel to help them in their struggle for liberation, mostly on small vessels.

He said, "You know, I lost a couple of these ships, they got sunk. And they sort of figured I needed a rest and that's what I'm here for." But this funny business of just bumping into people this way!

It might have been when we got back to Paris or it might have been when we were in Marseilles, we got a telegram from a chap by the name of

LG: Albert Timothy. He was a sort of rank and file leader of the London longshoremen, suggesting that we visit there just to talk to them and see what was going on.

Of course, both Johnny and I were curious and we asked some of the people around there, particularly A. Gruenais who was with the French Seamen's Union, very active leader, an awfully nice guy, and he suggested that we take along a man named V. I. Blankenzee. Blankenzee was a Dutch seaman and he had spent the entire war in London trying to help husband the Dutch fleet, which, you know, remained loyal to the Allies. It did not capitulate. Was it Leopold of Belgium or - ?

Ward: Leopold of Belgium - yes, he did.

LG: It was Blankenzee's job to make sure that the Dutch sailors kept communication with their families, got paid enough and saw that the families were taken care of because the fleet was operating out of London. Well, he went through all the buzz bombing in London and everything else and had all kinds of decorations from the British government for services rendered.

He knew his way around there, so we asked him if he'd come along and he said, "Sure - fine." So, we headed for London and somebody made a reservation for us at some hotel - I forget where - and while we're on the plane, the Dutchman asked where we were staying. And I said, "Well, here's the reservation they made." He said, "Oh, that's stupid - we don't want to stay there, that place is right over the railroad station; all you hear are the railroad trains all night long. I know, I've stayed there. I know a little hotel that is much quieter."

And so, going in from the airport, we tell the guy where we want to go and we go to this new hotel and they have rooms for us and we go in and clean up. It's still early in the afternoon - somewhere around three or four o'clock. We had a bite to eat at the hotel and we asked where we could find this guy, Albert Timothy who had wired us.

LG: The Dutchman said, "Well, these guys all stick together pretty well. I know my way around. Let's go down and we'll just walk into a couple of bars and we'll find out pretty fast. He went right to the place where a lot of the longshoremen live - these old two-story houses, you know.

And he hit pay dirt in the very first bar we walked into. We had a beer, he asked around and introduced himself so that the guys wouldn't be suspicious, asked where Timothy was. Sure, of course - where was he? Not too far away, a couple of doors down, and we walked over there.

His wife was there and she was very pleasant. Said, "He's out right now and he'll be back in about fifteen minutes." And he was. So we sat around for about three hours, asked him about the strike which was primarily because of the Canadian Seamen's Union; asked a lot of questions about the working conditions. They still work on tonnage there in London, or they did at that time.

Ward: A form of piece work?

LG: Form of piece work and the headaches that go with it; these young guys gravitating together and older guys being segregated into separate gangs. They can't work at the same pace. A lot of dickering, apparently; sometimes there would be dickering on every damn job before they started work because they felt some cargo wasn't in exactly the same shape it should have been; well, then they wanted a different rate for that and so forth.

It was an almost ad hoc way of collective bargaining, but apparently they were somewhat better paid than most of the workers, and the work at that point was quite good. It was a worthwhile session; we asked him about the refusal to work and he said, - I forget how long it had been going on - a couple of weeks - "The TUC is trying to break the thing. We were hoping to spread it to Liverpool, but it does not look too likely." If we get word by tonight that we

LG: can't spread the thing any further, we'll be having a big meeting tomorrow at the Victoria Park and call the thing off. If you want to come down and listen to the meeting, fine."

We thought that would be a good idea, too. But when we got back to the hotel, Scotland Yard was waiting for us. I guess the reason they weren't waiting for us when we arrived at the first hotel was because the reservation had been changed in the cab.

Here were these gentlemen from Scotland Yard telling us that we were being heaved out of England, deported forthwith; and handing us an order signed by Chudor Ede, the home secretary; we were being deported as undesirable forthwith and forever. One of these weird orders, you know. No reason given, just undesirable.

Ward: Including your Dutch friend?

LG: My Dutch friend, I guess they heaved him out and sent him back too. Yeah.

Ward: I thought he was a pretty well liked person.

LG: That didn't make any never-mind in the Labor government; completely out of their line, that's all. Here you had this defiance by a section of labor, you see. Sir Walter "Latrine", who was very prominent in the Labor government, determined that the back of this longshore stoppage was going to be broken.

Anyway, the Scotland Yard guys said, "You have to pack your bags and we are keeping you in custody overnight." We said, "What's the purpose of that? We'll be here in the morning and I'd like to call the American Embassy and find out what the score is." They said, "Well, you can call the American Embassy when we get down there. But, sorry, you have to be taken into custody - those are our orders." Oh, there was nothing very funny about that.

LG: I guess the only amusing thing was that they took us down in one of these big British cars and one of them must have left his bowler hat on the seat because I felt something funny when I sat down - and I sat down on his bowler hat! I guess that wasn't ever in shape again. I don't think he was too fond of me! Anyway, they locked us up in Old Bailey and it was a miserable goddam place.

We stayed there overnight. Couldn't eat the goddam breakfast; it was hopeless, some watery porridge or something. I don't think you're missing too much when you miss out on British food. The next morning they take us through all this damn business of fingerprinting, photographs and all that crap, and then take us out to the airport.

I had called the American Embassy from Old Bailey that night; they allowed me one phone call and I told the embassy where we were, and thought we were entitled to the protection of our government and that no reason had been given for this. And this guy I talked to had apparently been alerted because his reply was so quick, it was wholly prepared. He said, "After all, you're in a foreign country and you have to observe the laws."

I said, "We haven't broken any." He said, "I'm sorry, we'll have to look into the thing - not tonight though - we'll do it tomorrow when our offices are open." But, the next morning they had a reservation made for us on a plane back to Paris. The only decent thing that happened is that en route the Scotland Yard guy said, "We have a little time. You couldn't have been very happy with that jail food." I said, "I don't know, I didn't eat it." "Well, we'll stop - there's a pleasant place to have lunch."

Ward: The story we got here was that you had given an interview or held a press conference. Some reporter quoted you in the local press as offering support to this stoppage. That didn't happen?

LG: No press conference in London, that I can recall.

Ward: You weren't interviewed by any of the local reporters?

LG: No. As a matter of fact, when they got us down to the airport, they hustled us on to the plane. Oh, you see, there were a lot of reporters hanging around. I might have made some crack to them. I did issue a statement when I got back to Paris; that could have been it.

Ward: Oh, I see.

LG: And that didn't have anything in it that had to do with the longshore stoppage, because as this guy Timothy had already told me, unless they could spread the thing they planned to call it off anyway. There was no use our trying to jump into the act. Incidentally, the Canadian shipping industry was just a handful of ships. I don't recall any of them sailing off the west coast.

I know some British ships came in. I did issue a statement there that we would do our best to even up scores. As a matter of fact, I called the International office and reached Gerry Bulcke, who was vice-president at the time. And I told Gerry what happened and that Johnny Meletta and I had gotten our ass heaved out of there and could we get hold of any British ship that was around there and tie it up for a while.

He said, "Fine, we'll try to do that." And he finally ran down a British ship, the only one that had been around port was in Seattle and the damn thing had sailed a half hour before he could run it down. So, we never did manage to tie up a British ship.

But that press statement that I made, though, was carried, deliberately, of course, in Hawaii. In some ways I asked for it because the headline there was "GOLDBLATT DECLARES WAR ON ENGLAND" - you see! (laughter) After all, the 1949 strike was still going on, the longshore strike.

Ward: Now, there was some aftermath to that. Let's round out that story.

LG: Oh, the aftermath - that hung around for years.

Ward: You made several trips for various reasons through England to various places in the succeeding years?

LG: No. What happened was this: that order plagued me for years; in 1959 we were invited to send a delegation to the Soviet Union and three of us went. And that was L. B. Thomas, Mike Samaduroff, a Russian, who is also retired now from the longshore local in San Francisco, and myself. We covered a number of the ports there; Baku, Odessa, Leningrad; spent a fair amount of time there and saw a great many things. Also met with (Premier Nikita) Krushchev for about an hour.*

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We covered a lot of bases; everything from the Hermitage Museum to the Bolshoi ballet to the famous circus there.

Ward: Did you see Popov (a famous clown)?

LG: We saw Popov. He was still active in those days, still doing that famous slackwire act of his, one of the most spectacular I have ever seen, including a technique of getting the audience all involved by chasing a pig through the place. It was quite a circus.

But to go back to my impressions about the unions. They were functioning unions; there's no question about that. Now as to how much detail they covered on the job in the settlement of grievances and things of that sort, we were in no position to judge, other than what we were told.

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*Editor's Note: The following is an expansion of comment on the trip of an ILWU delegation to the USSR. The voices will be found on Tape 42, late side of "A", continuing to halfway on Side "B".

LG: One thing I was impressed with was that they had formal grievance machinery. They also had certain safety standards that were good. For example, a lot of the loading of ships there is done by crane; these tall cranes; they don't use the ship's gear; and they had a wind velocity indicator on the crane. If the indicator, because of high winds, reached a certain point the crane stopped, and they automatically stopped work; didn't try working when you had the long cables swinging all over the place under hazardous conditions.

The other thing was that they were obviously playing around with all kinds of technical innovations. There were no containers around, but they showed us a fork lift they were experimenting with, which had a set of claws with which to pick up sacks. How the thing would work out in the long pull I'm not sure, as against loading those sacks on palette boards. Maybe it could work out, maybe it couldn't.

They had another one, something we have on the west coast as well, that will pick up barrels and turn them around into different positions for purposes of stacking. In a port close by Odessa they had a bulk loader, primarily for the stacking of ore, which is really an adaptation, I think, of some machinery they must use in the coal mines; in other words, something with a set of long arms.

The most interesting thing about that visit was that it was freezing cold; winter was just setting in, and when the wind starts blowing in off the Black Sea, it's much colder than just zero weather; and here was the guy demonstrating the machine, wearing a pea coat, open; bare-handed. Here we were, shivering in our overcoats and gloves, and there was something about his whole attitude - he was very proud of the machine and everything else - saying, "Look, we're a pretty tough crew around here. You ought to know it."

LG: The other impression I had about the unions came when we attended the -

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LG: trade union congress in Moscow of the Sea and River Workers' Union. It was an interesting gathering because there we met a number of people we had met in the ports. We met this man who clearly was an Iranian, or of Iranian background; he was from Azerbijian, and with a similar name, Achmed Aliev. He'd have looked more at home riding a horse.

And a man from Odessa, Bakursky, (Chairman of the Black Sea Basin Committee of the Sea and River Workers' Union), who I understand is still around and in charge of one of the Seamen's Institutes there; and a chap by the name of Nikolai Pronyakin from Leningrad. We had what amounted to a going-away dinner with them after the day was over.

Talking With Mr. Kruschchev

LG: After addressing this conference and giving them greetings and thanking them for their hospitality, we went directly to the Kremlin for the purpose of meeting Khruschchev. I was impressed by the fact that when we walked into the Kremlin there was no appearance of over-security. Nobody shook us down. It was just a normal meeting, and . . .

Ward: They knew you were coming?

LG: They knew we were coming, of course. Yes.

Ward: Nobody patted you over?

LG: Oh, no, no, nothing like that. Kruschchev himself was amiable and easy to talk to.

Ward: Did you have your own interpreter, or did you use his?

LG: No, we used his interpreter. There had been an interpreter, Igor Klimov, assigned to us and had made the trip with us, but he was not at this session. I think the man who translated for Kruschchev was Troyanovsky.

Ward: The journalist? The journalist who, you said, put some words in your mouth, if I remember.

LG: No, that was another one, an entirely different man. That was Yuri Kuznetsov. He's a journalist, he still is. Troyanovsky, I think, was the official interpreter for the Soviet government in the English field. I think he was the one who came to the U. S. with Kruschchev; I'm not positive. During this session I had a a very peculiar feeling -- remember, by that time I think there had been a meeting between Eisenhower* and Kruschchev -

Ward: They might have had some consultations about Camp David.

LG: Maybe that was it. I made some remark that things were looking up in terms of relations between the Soviet Union and the U. S., and his only answer was that, "Well, we hope so." There was a real question mark there. It was a bit later when we found out that (Francis Gary) Powers had been in these over-flights. Remember the U-2? The U-2 was going on, and Kruschchev must have known about it at the time.

Later on, some Russian I'd known who was one of the attaches of the Washington office, made the remark that they had been looking forward to having Eisenhower visit the Soviet Union. Eisenhower never did; the U-2 blew that thing up. This Russian said if there'd been any indication from Eisenhower at all of even some sort of regret, or maybe a misunderstanding, or that orders hadn't gotten through; anything -- anything -- the Russians would have accepted it and brushed the thing off.

This, I think, was after Powers was shot down. So, these overflights, done at extremely high altitudes, indicated that the Soviet detection

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*(President Dwight D.)

LG: equipment must have been highly sophisticated. Anyway, that was the only thing that sort of --

Ward: That was not quite cordial?

LG: Not quite. In other words, it had an abrasive question mark at the end of it. Although Kruschchev made statements there about his determination to move ahead to what amounted to unilateral disarmament. These statements were very strong, and confirmed publicly about two weeks later in some sort of a public gathering they had in Moscow.

Now how these things sat with the rest of the Politburo, or how they sat with the general staff, I don't know. But it wasn't too long after that when there were also a great many difficulties on other scores.

There was no mention of the Chinese, or anything like that. As a matter of fact, in 1959 they had some 2000 Russian technicians in China; they weren't withdrawn until 1960.

Ward: Well, what time of year was this when you were there?

LG: It was late November, 1959. It was getting very cold. As a matter of fact, when we hit the freeze, in Leningrad they were shoveling frost off the sidewalks, not snow. When we said, "My God, does it stay this cold all the time?", they said, "No, it'll warm up as soon as it snows."

In Leningrad I did have a chance to see the man who had represented the Sea and River Workers' Union in Marseilles, Alexander Budanov. He had become the head of the port. The unions said their specific role was productivity, the number one thing, reaching their economic goals; but they had a series of rights, and so forth, all spelled out.

LG: Their wage scales were set in keeping with a national structure; in other words, the national structure was worked out first, and then their scale was fitted in. I don't think they had grievances declaring that the board of adjustment ought to give so much more money, or something like that. I don't think there is that kind of bargaining in the Soviet Union.

One thing was quite clear, though: when trade unionists showed a great deal of competence in representing their people in handling grievances and understanding exactly how relationships should be maintained with the workers, it was almost inevitable that they were brought out of the union and into the administrative bodies.

Here was Budanov, who had been the head of the Sea and River Workers' Union; the next time I see him, he's the chief honcho in the port of Leningrad, in charge of the whole operation.

Ward: If I remember rightly, I was there about six months before you were - when there was a slacker in the work team, a guy who wasn't pulling his share of the load, instead of the boss stepping in and attempting to correct the situation according to his lights, the workers themselves were supposed to take care of this guy.

LG: They'd try to, yes. That's an aspect of Soviet life which I think would make it very difficult for you or me to live in. For example, what happens if you get somebody who just goofs off? He's just not pulling his share of the load, that's all. If there's work to be done and somebody else is picking up the heavy end of something, fine, let him pick it up, you see.

Well, apparently discharge is almost impossible, without the consent of the union. They do reach some cases where there is no choice. But when you ask for the rationale for this, it holds together. "Look, what's the good of discharging this man; we're just going to hand the problem to somebody else. It's still the problem of the country."

LG: "All right, what do you do about it?" "Well, we talk to him; then we try to find out, maybe there's something in his home life that's creating an attitude towards his work that makes it difficult. So we'll talk to his friends; we might go out and talk to his family." Well, imagine the reaction of somebody in this country when all these people start moving in on you from every direction to help straighten out your problem.

Incidentally, the situation is not too much different than what I found out later in China, in terms of the community feeling of responsibility for the individual, including helping him to get squared away.

But I think it is more significant, this business of - I wouldn't call it pilfering, exactly - lifting the most competent administrator out of the union and putting him into administrative posts, either in the same industry or in some other area.

In some ways I guess it's a perfectly normal procedure, because it could very well be that a good, competent trade unionist has got talents that are sufficient to go beyond the trade union problems of everyday life. I noticed that one man, for example, said that he was studying at night.

A lot of them studied at night, took courses; a good many of them in engineering, or what they call engineering, which is a very broad field. So many kinds of engineering; even, for example, an understanding of dock operations, the machinery to be used, and so forth, and the gear and what have you; which would fall into some sort of engineering class.

Ward: Wasn't that what happened to Vasily Kuznetsov, who's now deputy premier?

LG: Kuznetsov was formerly head of the All-Russian Trade Union Congress.

Ward: That's quite an example.

LG: Yes, that's an example of what goes on. But at least they did have grievance machinery; there appeared to be fairly close relationships with the workers. In each case they all were very proud of the facilities they had set up for the members. These were oh, what they call cultural centers; that word is used a great deal there, where motion pictures are shown, dances, and so forth; they also help to run things like the Seamen's Institutes.

Ward: Did you visit any factories?

LG: Yes, we visited one of the very large turbine factories and got a chance to see some of the work going on there. Frankly, I just don't know enough about them to be in a position to judge whether it was a highly efficient operation, or something else, you see.

Ward: I gather from what you say that you have a stronger feeling about Russian trade unionism, as it's practiced, than you have to date on Chinese trade unionism.

LG: Frankly, I think that the Russians have their trade unions fairly well integrated, with an understanding of their proper functions and a direct relationship to the rank and file. My impressions there would be stronger than the ones I had in China. Bearing in mind, at the same time, that the Chinese were going through an enormous amount of change, and spent quite a bit of time on their cultural revolution.

Ward: And they haven't had the time yet, either?

LG: Not only a question of not having the time; remember that during the cultural revolution a lot of trade unions went out of business, so that the chance to make these changes never occurred. I am still trying to get more details, if I can -- and somebody promised to send me some more records -- on what happened at the trade union congress that they held in China in October.

LG: I'll just mention one small incident in winding up on this Russian thing. When we first arrived in Moscow - I believe it was the first day we were there; we arrived in the evening - I said I wanted to go by the U. S. Embassy, which I did, and Mike Samaduroff and L. B. Thomas came along. We couldn't meet with Lewellyn Thompson; he wasn't available.

Ward: The ambassador?

LG: The ambassador, right; but two of his aides were there. I forget their exact names; I think one was Walters. They later got caught up in one of these businesses, you know; when somebody gets heaved out of this country, they get heaved out of the other country. We told them what we were there for.

They wanted to know if we were in the AFL-CIO, and we said no. They said, "Well, you know our relations are directly with them. Look, what would you like to know?" But they didn't even know where the headquarters of a certain Russian union were. I said, "Here's the address; I have it. It isn't too far from here, is it?" He said, "No." I asked, "Why don't you go over and talk to them?" "Oh, we don't do that." They had a big chart on the wall and they said, "Who's the president of this union?" And I mentioned the name, Alexander Koetkin. He looks at this chart and says, "Gosh, we don't have it down here."

So, here they were; oh, they had a couple of general things to say, but their main suggestion was that the Peking Restaurant in Moscow was excellent; that was their primary contribution.

We decided to ask for something else. We said we'd heard all about the labor camps. "Would you tell us where some of these labor camps are located? We'll ask for the right to go visit them." They said, "Well, you've seen the map of the AFL-CIO" - issued at the time of (Jay) Lovestone and (Irving) Brown, (prominent AF of L functionary), and I said, "No, I remember

LG: seeing one some place, but after all, I don't assume that's official information that would have the reliability of the State Department. You must know where these labor camps are."

"Well, we're not exactly positive." I said, "Well, just give us the names, one of them, anyway." He said, "One of them is near Vladivostok."

I said, "In that case I guess we'll just have to figure out if we can take a trip there, that's all. They said we were free to go anywhere we want; they'd show us anything we want to see. Of course, things like defense things are different. They said we could do what we want, so just give us the names and we'll go find them." But they--refused to give us the names of any of these so-called slave labor camps.

On the way back from other parts of the country, though, we deliberately stopped again to see the guys at the embassy. We said we'd like to pay our respects to Lewellyn Thompson. They said, "We don't think he's available, but we'll check." Within a couple of minutes he was down talking to us.

He asked us about our trip, and we gave him our observations, including a number of impressions as to how the unions were run, and so forth and so on; that they seemed to have a fair amount of internal democracy; that in the question of elections they didn't run slates, as such, because, as they put it, if they ran a slate made up of all Communists, if any of them were repudiated, this would be quite a blow.

The Russians said they had to do a great deal of thinking as to who candidates were, and whether they had the support of the workers. I mentioned some of these things, as well as the handling of the grievance machinery. "Well," he says, "I'm not quite as impressed by your impressions as by some of the things I've heard." Obviously he felt that the unions there were just simply adjuncts, or only slightly more than adjuncts . . .

Ward: He was not impressed?

LG: He was not that impressed. The last question we raised with him was, "Anyway you cut it, it would be a very good thing if there were regular exchanges." I said, "Frankly, we don't like the idea of coming here as guests and not being able to invite them as our guests." And he was very blunt about it. He said, "Well, the policy for years has been that these things are cleared through the AFL-CIO." That's it.

Ward: That's been changed now?

LG: Just recently, yes.

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LG: Now, how popular unilateral disarmament was with the Russians, I don't know. It wasn't too long after that when Kruschchev was not in too good favor, anyway.

We had gone into the Soviet Union by way of Czechoslovakia, stopped there for a day or two and saw some of their operations - not much, it's primarily a river port - some of the trade unionists there, and we also stopped by the WFTU headquarters. They had moved to Prague from Paris after things got a bit too warm there. Spent our time in the Soviet Union and decided to return to Paris again.

There I'm led into the airport and notified that I could not stay - that they had a deportation order out for me too. And I said that I would have to see it. They did not have it with them and he said, "Those are my orders." And I said, "Well, I'm going to stay. I have a brother here and I'm going to spend some time with him." This argument went on for about an hour - I told -

Ward: This is Paris, not England?

LG: Paris - because obviously they have the same damn international blacklist.

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The International Blacklist

Ward: So, here you were in the hands of the Surete in Paris?

LG: Yes, the only thing this guy troubled to do was to tell L. B. Thomas and Mike Samadureff that they could go - there was no hold on them. He had a copy of either Trud or Isvetzia, one of the Russian papers, where there is a big front page picture of our meeting with Khruschchev. All he wanted to do was make sure I was the person; that's all, somebody told him to identify me, and nothing more.

But I refused to leave and just stood around there arguing until some guy came along from Pan Am (Pan-American Airlines) who said, "Well, you're very fortunate, Mr. Goldblatt; we can get you out on a 12 o'clock flight." That might have been four or five hours later, a direct flight to New York. So, I just told him, "Look, anytime I want your goddam airline, I'll talk to you."

There was one very charming gal there who spoke enough English (the guy from the Surete or whoever he was, from the Immigration Department maybe, didn't know much English), she kept saying, "Refuse to budge, refuse to budge. Stay right in there!" And this guy was getting worn down, worn down. I said, "I'm not going to go, if you want to take me to jail, I'll stay there. I want to talk to whoever your superior is. I have a brother here and I'm here to see him and that's all there is to it."

Believe it or not, that crazy character finally wrote me out a forty-eight hour visa. I still have it around someplace, a little slip of paper for a 48-hour visa. I stayed a bit longer that that, something close to 70 hours, and had a good visit with my brother.

LG: Obviously in those days (and I noticed this on a trip to Mexico and even up to Canada, and I was making a number of trips up to Canada) when you go through Immigration, they take out this damn book and they would invariably stop. My name was on the thing and they questioned me about where I had been and what I had been doing. So, clearly, this was part of an international blacklist which they maintained.

It showed up again when I was due to go to Japan; it was the time that Eisenhower had trouble getting into Japan; remember all the peace demonstrations?

Ward: They really gave Jim Hagerty, (the President's press secretary) a bad time and that scared Eisenhower away?

LG: Right. Now, what year was that?

Ward: I was in Japan in October of '59 and the Eisenhower incident had occurred not too long before.

LG: Right, because I was due to go there. I recall when we were in the Soviet Union; it was the same year as the so-called "kitchen conference" with Nixon. As a matter of fact both the ILWU and the PMA were invited to send a delegation; the PMA backed off, I think primarily because of the pressure of the State Department. There had been the U-2 incident. I think that killed the Summit Conference. It also killed some of the other programs Kruschchev had in mind, including reducing the size of the armed forces. So that I think he ran into several political problems there.

Anyway, I know that it was about the time that Eisenhower wanted to go to Japan. He had decided against going. About that same time we held the All Pacific and Asian Dock Workers Conference - we spent quite a bit of time in correspondence with Tomitaro Kaneda with some suggestions as to format.

Ward: Kaneda was what?

LG: he was the head of the Zenkowan, the old Japan dock workers union; I met him later on. As a matter of fact, he came to one of our conventions; I guess it was in 1960. The conference was held. Harry was there, Jack Price, Bill Chester and Craig Pritchett. Jack Hall might have been there too, and I think, yes, Jack Hall was there. I was supposed to go there too. Terry and I made plans. I knew this guy, Bob Wilson, who was one of the heads of the waterfront section of the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco. He was a rather nice guy - a Quaker -

Ward: What was the name again?

LG: Wilson. And he was a good friend of our neighbors who lived next door, Eldon and Mary Rich - they were all Quakers. I met him a number of times and sort of liked him. He suggested that they were going to go on a trade mission to Canton and we could go along. I figured "fine" and Terry and I had our plans made to finish up in Japan and be there in time for the conference. But that never worked out because the Japanese refused to give me a visa to come to Japan.

This became quite an issue in the Japanese Diet because a number of the members of the Diet raised a lot of hell. They pointed out I had one of the few records in the United States in support of the Japanese people during World War II on the question of their evacuation to the internment centers. Anyway, that didn't get very far. The Japanese government didn't change its mind and I didn't get to go to the conference; again, I'm sure, because of the same blacklist.

I had been bounced out of England, France and, as a matter of fact, several years later when Terry and I took this trip on an Israeli ship . . .

Ward: That would have been in '63 or '64.

LG: I know it was after some particularly long stretch of work - it might have been the '63 Warehouse negotiations . . .

Ward: It was probably around the turn of the year.

LG: Yes, it was late in the year because when we picked up the ship in Montreal it was just freezing over, and we had to get out.

Ward: It was the winter of '63 - '64.

LG: That's it because we flew into Montreal and took the ship there. And we got to Genoa where we were stuck for a number of days, at first out in the stream. I discovered later all I had to do was send a telegram to the longshoremen and they would have sent a boat out to pick us up, which would have embarrassed them. When we got in Genoa, apparently there was a long bull session between the captain and somebody from Immigration at the gangplank. It was the same goddam blacklist.

The skipper, who knew his way around, said, "Now, look, these are our two passengers - special passengers - old friends of ours and also good friends of the longshoremen here; I don't think it's a good idea. I'll guarantee that they will always be in my custody when they are on shore." He figured there must be some way to get around this guy; sure enough, the guy said, "Okay - that's different, they'll be just going off with you." They didn't stop us from going around, seeing the longshoremen and going around Genoa. But no question that this blacklist just continued around.

Ward: You never - was there ever an incident where you led a delegation that had to go through London and they went up town while you were held in a room at the airport?

LG: Not a delegation, but there was an incident like that.

Ward: You had enough trouble?

LG: When I went to the Soviet Union in 1959 I made no plans at all to go by way of London. I stopped on the way back and they wouldn't let me in; that was it; they wouldn't let me in. I

LG: deliberately stopped on the way back and tried to do that. That's when they told Thomas and Mike Samadureff they could stay in, to go ahead. I couldn't leave the airport.

Ward: Oh, yes, I guess that is the story.

LG: I just decided the hell with it. The deportation order was finally revoked.

Ward: Okay, tell that story. What happened?

Blighty Lets Down the Bars

LG: Well, one of the people I corresponded with was Clive Jenkins. He was the head of a union of scientific, managerial people and things of that sort. Interesting kind of a union. It's really all sorts of, I guess you'd call it second level management, not high management. Clive Jenkins had done a very effective job of organization. I guess I must have met him somewhere; maybe I met him when he came to San Francisco, somebody gave him my name.

Ward: Let me see if I can't refresh your memory - wasn't it at Dave Jenkins' house at a party? You met somebody at Dave Jenkins house?

LG: That might have been the time I met Clive Jenkins.

Ward: I think it was a Labor M.P. (Member of Parliament)?

LG: No - no - that was Russell Kerr. Anyway Dave Jenkins was going to London - this was later - and I suggested he talk to Clive Jenkins to see whether something could be done. As a matter of fact, I had had him to one of our conventions; we struck up a pretty good friendship. We keep in touch; as a matter of fact, I missed him when Terry and I came back from China; he had just left here; he'd been around for a couple of weeks.

LG: Dave Jenkins talked to Clive Jenkins and Clive Jenkins talked to Roy Jenkins who was then the Home Secretary and a new order was issued revoking the other order and allowing me to visit England. A year or two after that, Terry and I finally went to London and spent a delightful week there.

Ward: That spoils it; it isn't as good a story. The one I heard was that this Labor M.P. - a party was held in his honor at Dave Jenkins - and when he heard what had happened to you, he says, "Well, I'll take care of that," and two weeks later it was all whiffed away.

LG: No, that was Russell Kerr; I'm sure he pitched in and helped and that may have been the sequence of events. They went to Russell Kerr. He and I kept meeting periodically after that. When he and his wife were here (she's dead now) she had just come from the convention of the Democratic Party in Chicago; in '68, wasn't it?

Ward: Sixty-eight - that was the Humphrey convention?

LG: Yep, that was the year, when they beat the hell out of all the kids. His wife was there because I remember seeing them in San Francisco. She was doing that story for the British press.

Ward: Then there is some basis to the story about meeting the Labor M.P. at Dave Jenkins party?

LG: Yes - Russell Kerr. A couple of years later he came through here and one of the things he wanted to do was play a round of golf. I took him down to Crystal Springs with a couple of guys from the Teamsters' Union - Al Costa and Mark O'Reilly. We played a round together. So, that was Russell Kerr; I liked him - good man.

In '68 we had a chance to meet Cousins when he came to San Francisco; Frank Cousins, head of the TUC; and he was also, for a while, the head of the . . . .

Ward: Transport Workers?

LG: The Transport Workers and then the head of the TUC -

Ward: A leftwinger?

LG: I wouldn't call him a leftwinger. I guess he was more of a leftwinger than the prime minister at the time, Harold Wilson. Yes, he was to the left of Wilson, no question about that.

I heard the famous debate on their incomes and prices policy before the Labor Party convention at Brighton. Terry and I took the Brighton Belle (a train). Terry went down one day, and another time I went down with Bob Treuhaft, when Decca was in town. Also, we had a chance to roam around London and spent time with Ella Winter and Donald Ogden Stewart (famous screen writer who married Lincoln Steffens' widow). Had dinner with them at their home. They live in the same place where Ramsey McDonald had lived. Remember, the first Labor prime minister of England; a place on the heath, a lovely old house.

Ward: On the heath - Hampstead?

LG: I guess so, yes. And they had some sort of a get-together at Sonya Orwell's house.

Ward: Orwell?

Lg: Sonya Orwell was the widow of the man who wrote "1984" - George Orwell. And it was a great get-together. Had a chance to meet C. P. Snow (a prominent British author) and this guy, Kenneth Tynan, the drama critic. The whole thing was really quite a delight. A good trip and some interesting conversation there. I was talking to C. P. Snow and I told him I had just been to Brighton. And he said, "What did you think of it?"

And I said, "I got a funny impression that the way politics operate around here is that any time the Tory government figures that they've done whatever they can to squeeze the working

LG: class and that there are still a couple of notches that can be taken up in their belt, they meet somewhere, on Downing Street or wherever they have these sessions, and decide among themselves that it's time the Labor government came into power and did the job.

"I was listening to this argument on incomes and wages or incomes and price, as they call it, and that's the only impression I get when I listen to Wilson and particularly Callaghan.* This gal who is in charge of the railroads - (Barbara) Castle, I think her name is, talks a straight employer line." And he listened to me for a while and said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Goldblatt, you're terribly wrong." And I said, "What do you mean? Don't you think that happens?" He said, "No - no, you don't understand - it's done by instinct." He had this thing so well defined in his head, you know . . .

Ward: Well, who's instinct?

LG: Apparently by the employers and all the political parties; in other words, it's just done by instinct. They are all so well-trained, just like their shadow cabinet, you know, even when the Tories are in power.

But it was a great trip. We hadn't been there quite a day when we decided that perhaps the easiest way to roam around London was to not take these tours. We knew how to take the buses all right. You figure them out by the numbers, you know, like the 88 to the Tate, to see some of the museums.

Another day we got one of these little British mini-cars with a driver, a young gal who was making a couple of bucks; she took us around a good deal. And in the middle of the cruising

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*James Callaghan, who became Prime Minister, 1976-79.

LG: around London, I said, "I'd like to go by the Highgate Cemetery" and it was getting toward late afternoon. "I'd like to see Karl Marx's grave", and that got into a long conversation by itself.

"Oh, you must have seen 'Morgan'",she said. And I said, "Oh, I've seen 'Morgan', but I know Karl Marx is buried at Highgate." Oh, you know 'Morgan' - it's a great picture - black comedy - She said, "What do you think of 'Morgan'?" I said, "Oh, I liked the picture and I liked the young man in it too." She said, "Oh, I'd never have anything to do with anybody like him; impossible. Do any of those things get to San Francisco?" I said, "Sure, we stopped living in teepees a long time ago."

Anyway, she was determined to get to Highgate. I knew the route but she was determined to find it on her own. Finally, she gave up and asked a cop, and by the time we got to the cemetery it had closed and there was some guy walking along there and she said, "Can we see Karl Marx's grave?" And he says, "You might if you walk along the fence."

There's a small park - I guess Highgate - alongside the cemetery so we're walking along there and we get to a spot and sort of peering into the cemetery because I remember seeing pictures of that huge planch through a sort of outside hedge. We couldn't spot it; too overgrown.

Some character comes along wearing a hearing aid - a trumpet - I hadn't seen one of those in years, so this girl tries to talk to him. He finally gets the drift, but he didn't talk, he shouted. You could hear him all the way down to . . . He says, "You can get in down through the fence down there; a lot of people do."

So here we are in London only 48 hours and we're breaking into the Highgate Cemetery; but sure enough, we found our way in and wandered around, found Marx's grave. There were flowers which had been left there during the day. We paid our respects to the old guy. I always thought he was a great old man.

LG: I think it was after that that I ran into Bob Treuhaft and then he and I went to Brighton for a second time - Terry wasn't interested in going again. Then we met these other people who were interested in the meeting and of course I met Clive Jenkins and thanked him and spent some time with him. Anyway, it was a long time from 1949 until 1966 before that damn blacklist was lifted.

Ward: Fifteen years?

LG: More like 16 or 17. I have the order down stairs somewhere, both the deportation order issued by Chudor Ede and the revocation by Roy Jenkins. I know we went to Marx's grave on that trip; it was on the way back from a trip to - oh, Terry and I had gone to Hungary and Bulgaria. Then we stopped in Munich to see my sister-in-law. My brother had died by then - I mean Saul; you met Saul?

Ward: Yes, we met him in Paris and later we met his wife, Ruth.

LG: Yes, you met Ruth on your next trip.

Ward: We met Saul in Paris. He took us to dinner in Paris; and then the next trip he had passed away and we went to visit Ruth. I think he had been dead just a few months and when we went back to Paris we saw Ruth and spent an hour or two with her at the apartment with the children and all that.

LG: That was before she moved back to Munich.

Ward: Yes, just before.

LG: Well, she couldn't quite make a go of it in Paris - too expensive - and her mother had this place in Munich and that's where she lives now. Whatever work she was doing in her field, she could do just as easily in Munich. We stopped by Munich and then we stopped by Genoa to see my old friend, the skipper who had been in charge of that ship when we went through Genoa.

Ward: The man who shepherded you around?

LG: Yes, the man who was in charge of us while we were in Genoa and in whose custody we were for safe-keeping, so we stopped by to see him for a day or two - he was port captain.

I remember going by the British Consulate. I asked them to check because I understood that the order had been revoked and that there was no problem in getting into England. I also went to the American Consulate in Genoa and oh, sat around for a long time; this fellow was on the phone and double-checking and finally came back and said, "I'm not so sure it's advisable for you to go." So that even though I'd been notified that things had been cleared up, there was all kinds of footdragging and this guy discouraged me from going.

I knew there was no purpose in going back to him. I think we did the next morning and he hadn't any further word. I decided that Terry and I would just take our chances - the worst that could happen was that they wouldn't allow us in. So, we went on from Genoa - we flew to London -

Ward: And there was no problem?

LG: Other than the fact that at the airport after all the other passengers had gone, we were still sitting there for damn near an hour while they went through every goddam thing we had in our suitcases. They were trying to check the lining and every thing else and what the hell they could be looking for, nobody had the slightest idea. I'm sure this was part of the business of being difficult, that's all.

Ward: Okay, so that was over. That finishes that particular story, doesn't it?

LG: It's just that it's a lot of story.

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(Editor's Note: The following discussion of a group trip to Israel was taped out of context as an afterthought to the main interview, but is inserted here to preserve chronological continuity as much as possible. The following dialogue therefore will be heard on the last half of Tape 42, side B, and the first half of Tape 43, side A. The balance of Tape 40, side B is resumed in proper sequence at the conclusion of the account of Goldblatt's Israeli trip.)

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Estolv Ethan Ward

Born 1899 in Los Angeles; father a Socialist lawyer out of Rhode Island; mother an ardent feminist, daughter of a San Francisco Quaker merchant, and possessor of a Ph. D. from Swarthmore and an M. D. from Boston Medical School. The infant was removed to San Francisco at age two weeks, and with lacunae has lived in the Bay Region, mostly Berkeley, ever since.

Three and a half years of institutionalized instruction; otherwise his education came through tutors, travel, and daily family discussions.

Became campus reporter at U. C. Berkeley for the Oakland Tribune, proceeding to top rewrite, general assignment, and assistant city editor. Covered the San Francisco general strike in 1934 and in those three days learned things that changed his life. Became a founder of the local chapter of the Newspaper Guild and was fired and blacklisted by his publisher, Joseph R. Knowland. Became bailiff and court reporter for the California Supreme Court, meanwhile being active on his leisure time in the burgeoning CIO labor movement. Resigned his court job to become founding executive secretary of the Alameda County CIO Council.

In the next 11 years, he became successively first vice-president, California State CIO Council; CIO legislative representative, Sacramento, 1939; executive secretary, Harry Bridges Defense Committee, Angel Island trial, 1939; executive vice-president, California Labor's Non-Partisan League, 1940; radio writer, Los Angeles CIO news, 1940-41; organizer, Mine Mill and Smelter Workers' Union, in Los Angeles and Southern Nevada, 1942-44; San Francisco CIO radio writer, 1944; CIO-PAC director, San Francisco CIO Council, 1945-48. Following that, odd jobs and labor journalism.

Author, Harry Bridges On Trial, Modern Age, 1940; a labor novel published only in Polish translation, Renegat, 1953. Numerous labor and travel articles.

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